

Changing Directions?

The Experience of Young Offenders who Attend a Group Based Intervention

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Youth crime has serious social and economic consequences for the young people involved, their families, communities and society. Group based interventions have demonstrated efficacy in reducing rates of recidivism but little is known about the experience of young people who attend such programmes. The current study aimed to explore the experiences that young people at risk of re-offending have of attending a group based intervention, to identify what factors impacted on how the young people experienced the intervention and to explore what impact attendance at the group had on the young people's lives during and after their attendance at the group.

Method

Participants were six young people at moderate to high risk of re-offending who had attended a group work intervention to address their anti-social behaviour. The group is a thirteen week intervention that aims to reduce recidivism, reduce endorsement of beliefs supporting anti-social, aggressive and offending behaviour and to increase capacity for social problem solving and moral reasoning. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Results

From the analysis of interview materials, five super-ordinate themes emerged that captured the participants' descriptions of their experience of the intervention. These super-ordinate themes were Personal Development and Learning; Group Membership; Cognitive Shift; Relationships and Ending.

Discussion

The results are discussed and consideration is given to the clinical implications. A methodological critique is provided along with reflections from the researcher.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Cost of Youth Crime

The MORI Youth Survey, 2004, conducted on behalf of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, found that the peak age for offending was 14 years old and that if a young person had not committed an offence by the age of 14 years then he/she was unlikely to do so. The most common age for first time offending was between 11 and 12 years for children in mainstream schools and between 10 and 11 years for those children excluded from mainstream school. The findings indicated that the younger a person is when they first offend, the more likely they are to go on to commit serious offences in the future. The study also found that 26% of boys in mainstream school have been charged with an offence compared with 68% of those excluded from mainstream schools.

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transition and Crime began in January 1998 with the aim of following all children living in Edinburgh who started their first year at secondary school in 1998-99. This study benefits from a sample size of around 4500 young people from all of the state schools and most of the independent schools, ensuring that all social settings and neighbourhoods are represented. This group has been assessed each year and their progress has been followed into adulthood. A follow up in 2007 (McAra & McVie, 2007) found that by the age of 19 years the rate of conviction of this cohort group was 8.6%, in line with Scottish

Executive statistics for 2004-5. Of this group 44% had only one conviction and 18% had only two convictions and 23% had in excess of four convictions.

Young people with conduct problems are more likely to have anti-social personality disorders as adults as well as ongoing criminal behaviour problems, drug and alcohol related problems, more problems with physical and mental health, education, occupational adjustment, marital stability and social integration (Carr, 1999). Delinquent adults are known to have twice the mortality rates for unnatural deaths compared to non-delinquent counterparts (Laub & Vaillant, 2000). Anti social behaviour and criminality are also found to be intergenerationally transmitted (Carr, 1999). This is not surprising given the social and economic sequelae of criminal activity.

Anti-social behaviour has serious personal and economic costs for young people, their families and society. The Scottish Executive has spent in excess of £33 million since 2002-2003 to support the expansion of intensive initiatives to tackle offending and anti-social behaviour (youthjusticescotland.gov.uk). Scott et al. (2001) conducted a longitudinal study of 142 ten year olds and found that by the age of 28 years those with conduct disorder had costs on average ten times higher than those without conduct disorder. The range in costs across the sample was £0 to £379,292. The cost of crime constituted two thirds of the costs for the conduct disorder groups and was the costliest domain followed by educational provisions, foster and residential care and benefits. Given the huge cost to society, there is

scarce research that focuses specifically on children and young people who offend (Buist, 2003).

1.2. Risk Factors associated with Youth Crime

1.2.1. Individual, Family and Social Factors

Criminality is strongly concentrated in family networks and is known to pass down in these families from generation to generation. For example, in the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (West and Farrington, 1977), 5% of the 400 families followed were found to be responsible for half of the criminal convictions for the entire sample (Rutter et al, 1998). Predictors identified in this longitudinal study of 411 males followed from age 8 to 32 included individual, family and social factors. These were impulsivity, low intelligence and attainment, family criminality, inconsistent and erratic parenting and socio-economic problems (Farrington, 1995).

Criminal families are considered to be less likely to provide adequate supervision, are more likely to use harsh and inconsistent parenting methods with cruel attitudes and more family conflict. There is evidence of both a genetic component as well as 'contagion' from criminal parents and older siblings. It is likely that a genetic risk increases the likelihood of anti social behaviours but whether or not they emerge depends on a range of mediating social and environmental factors (Rutter et al., 1998; Rutter, 2005). Furthermore, individuals with anti-social histories are more likely to have children with partners who also have anti-social histories and this concentration of anti-social individuals within a family will contribute further to conduct problems in off-spring (Wasserman & Seracini, 2001). Jaffee et al (2006) reported the findings from a thirty year cohort study and found that parents with a

history of conduct disorder were at increased risk of social disadvantage and relationship violence. Furthermore, poor educational and occupational attainment were more prevalent in people with a history of criminal activity. Maternal educational attainment and maternal childhood aggression are also associated with an increased risk of conduct disorder in young people (Slebin et al., 1998).

The absence of a father and step-family compositions have been associated with an increased risk of incarceration (Harper & McLanahan, 2004). In Scotland, one fifth of households are headed by a lone parent and one eighth live in a reconstituted family (Whyte, 2003). However, this varies from area to area and it is not the composition itself but the potential impact it has on parenting and attachment style that is considered to produce the risk (Whyte, 2003). Being a child in a single parent home can increase a child's exposure to stressful life events and social adversity (Wasserman and Sericini, 2001). Low social economic status and maternal stress have also been associated with disruptive behaviour as rated by parents and teachers (Barry et al. 2005). Broken homes can be considered a risk factor because of the resultant changes in caregivers, family discord and conflict and the impact on parenting and parental coping (Rutter et al., 1998). Thus, there are a number of family based risk factors that increase a child's exposure to adversity and the risk of developing conduct problems.

Parenting is considered to be a powerful predictors of early anti-social behaviour. Indicators in parenting practices include more conflict, inconsistent discipline, a

lack of supervision or monitoring, less positive interaction and behaviours that inadvertently reinforce negative childhood behaviours (Wasserman and Sericini, 2001). Patterson (1982) emphasises the role of coercive processes and posits that demanding children resist parental control by acting out and parents, over time, make fewer and fewer attempts to control their children's behaviour so that the child's behaviour is negatively reinforced because, by acting out, the child achieves freedom from his or her parents' demands and expectations. Ineffective parenting and negative family interactions can result in deviant behaviours that place the child at risk of academic failure and peer rejection and, subsequently, chronic conduct disorder (Patterson et al., 1989).

Moffitt and colleagues (Moffitt et al., 1994; Moffitt et al. 1996; Moffitt & Caspi, 2001) have suggested a distinction between two primary developmental courses for young people who commit offences. The model they propose is supported by longitudinal findings from a thirty year cohort study in New Zealand, the Dunedin study. The two primary developmental courses suggested are childhood-onset and adolescent-onset. Where there is childhood onset, the trajectory is likely to be life course persistent while adolescent onset is likely to resolve by early adulthood.

The life course persistent trajectory has been found to be differentially predicted by a number of individual characteristics. These include under-controlled temperaments and aspects of cognitive and motor development at age three years, low memory and cognitive abilities, reading difficulties and hyperactivity (Moffitt,

2001). Parental risk factors of life course persistent trajectories have been identified from these studies as teenage single parenthood, maternal mental health problems, harsh and neglectful parenting, family conflict, multiple changes to the primary caregiver and low family socio-economic status (Moffitt, 2001). The model suggest that it is the interaction between individual and parental factors that increases the risk of life course persistent offending trajectories. These risk factors in early childhood lead to difficulties in the child's subsequent interactions with the social world, resulting in rejection by peers and / or school failure so that spontaneous recoveries are relatively rare (Moffitt. et al., 1996).

In contrast, when the antisocial behaviour has an adolescent onset, as is the case for the majority of young people who offend, the antisocial behaviour is limited to the teenage years and arises as a result of the social context of adolescence and attempts to assert autonomy. These young people are more likely to have benefited from healthy early development and positive relationships with family, peers and teachers. Therefore young people on this trajectory are able to recover as they enter adulthood. As a result of their histories, there are often some differences in the types of crimes committed by the two group, with those associated with impulsivity associated with neuropsychological deficits and interpersonal and family difficulties, resulting in more violent and aggressive crime, while adolescent onset offenders commit more offences associated with autonomy and freeing themselves from adult control (Moffit et al, 1996).

1.2.2. Attachment, Abuse and Neglect

The central premise of Bowlby's attachment theory (1969) is that infants are born with a set of innate behavioural mechanisms that aim to maximise their survival with the primary function of protecting them from danger. Attachment behaviour, which have evolved as a mechanism to draw adult attention to the infant when they are in need of care or when they are distressed (eg. crawling, clinging, crying, staring). Exploratory behaviours enable the child to explore it's world, including their interactions and relationships with others. However, exploratory behaviours are dependent on the young child feeling safe enough to explore and to have the emotional and cognitive capacity to begin to make sense of their world. This exploration is not possible, however, if the child's basic care needs are not met by their primary caregiver and the child becomes preoccupied with his safety and having basic care needs met (Howe, 2005).

A healthy attachment between a caregiver and a child ensures the development of basic trust and reciprocity, the capacity for self regulation of affect and behaviour, the development of a sense of identity, autonomy and self-worth and the establishment of a set of moral values derived from empathy, conscience and compassion (Ladnier & Massanari, 2000). A healthy secure attachment also ensures that a child develops resilience and resources to manage stress and trauma and has experiences of the types of stimulating interactions that are required for healthy brain development (Ladnier & Massanari, 2000).

Early experiences with the caregiver are aggregated and become a set of representational systems called Internal Working Models (Bowlby, 1973). These are mental representations of the self, for example, as lovable and competent or as unlovable and incompetent, and of others, for example, as kind and trustworthy or as cruel and inconsistent (Howe, 2005). These internal representations are considered to influence all future relationships.

Neglectful and punitive parenting has been associated with more serious offending trajectories (Hoeve et al, 2008) and children who have been involved in the care system are at increased risk of criminal convictions in adulthood as well as poor educational attainment and physical and mental health problems (Viner & Taylor, 2005). Exposure to trauma and childhood sexual abuse have also been demonstrated to be associated with delinquency, aggression and affiliation with a negative peer group (Feiring et al., 2007; Maschi & Bradley, 2008).

Physical abuse in early life has been found to be a risk factor for chronic aggressive behaviour problems (Dodge et al., 1990). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that abused children develop biases in the processing of social information driven by negative expectations of themselves and others, so that they attribute hostile and negative intentions to others in ambiguous situations (Dodge et al., 1990).

Children with insecure attachments are known to have difficulties with emotion regulation:

'Children whose carers are the cause of their fearful states, and children who do not have access to a sensitively attuned carer are left acutely and chronically dysregulated' (Howe, 2005, p. 46).

Thus, attachment experiences can underpin deficits in social information processing and emotion regulation.

1.2.3. School and Peer Factors

Higher levels of school engagement have been associated with a lower likelihood of delinquency and better well-being amongst high risk young people (Tyler et al., 2008).

However, there are several reasons that anti-social young people struggle to cope with the demands of a school setting. Schools can place demanding constraints on individuals, particularly those who have experienced little supervision or effective parenting. In particular, children who have experienced coercive parenting characterised by negative reinforcement for aversive behaviours within the home and little positive reinforcement, are likely to struggle in peer relationships and school setting (Eddy et al., 2001). The lack of boundaries and expectations placed on them at home coupled with difficulties regulating their emotional reactions and a lack of self-control can lead to academic failure and a seeking out of other less restricted environments to be rewarded (Goltfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Furthermore, anti-social young people evoke negative reactions in teachers, as well as parents (Rutter et al., 1998) and this can impact on their school experience and relationships in terms of their teacher's ability and commitment to supporting their school experiences.

At 'Sweep 2' of the Edinburgh Study (Smith, 2006), the school experience of the young people was explored. The majority of young people reported positive attitudes towards school. There were no gender differences but there were differences in social class groups with those from higher social groups significantly more likely to report positive attitudes to school. Furthermore, those with negative attitudes were more likely to be involved in delinquency than those with positive attitudes. On further exploration the study found that, while the majority of the cohort and across delinquency bands believed that working hard and doing well at school would lead to a good job, those who had committed in excess of six offences were more likely to consider school to be a waste of time than non-delinquents, suggesting that they are aware of what school can offer others, in terms of their future prospects, but did not consider these opportunities to be appropriate or available to them. In addition, this group of delinquents were much less likely to strongly agree that they felt safe at school compared with non-delinquents. Those from lower social classes were more likely to want to leave school early and the higher the level and variety of delinquency, the less likely the young person was to want to stay on at school and go on to further education.

Those from lower social classes were associated with more bad behaviour at school and delinquents were particularly associated with bad behaviour at school. Furthermore, those who reported frequent bad behaviour at school were more likely to have no awards for achievement than those with good behaviour.

Truancy is increasingly recognised as a force that undermines a young person's capacity to achieve in education because it limits access to school resources. Of those with no delinquent acts, none reported playing truant and this increased in line with deviancy so that 65.6% of those who had six or more delinquent acts reported playing truant. This is in line with findings that young people who truant are three times more likely to offend (Graham & Bowling, 1995).

Positive peer characteristics have been demonstrated to significantly mediate the relationship between activity breadth and problem behaviour and alcohol use as well as depressive affect and self-worth (Simpkins et al., 2008). Many young people, however, experience peer rejection so that they do not have the opportunity to develop this protective factor. Dodge et al. (1990) found that 6-8 year olds who were socially rejected by their peers were more likely to have peer relationships characterised by anger and aggression. It follows that such children are most likely to associate with similarly rejected children. Anti-social peer groups thereby provide young people with the acceptance and reinforcement that they have not received from other children or within their family. Association with a negative peer group has been linked with early social failure and continued involvement

with anti-social peers and criminal activity. It has also been found to have the effect of normalising and increasing the social acceptability of aggression (Rhule, 2005).

Individual child factors and family factors combine within the context of community factors to produce young children who enter school exhibiting aggressive and disruptive behaviours. This leads to these children being rejected by their peers, which in turns leads them to look to deviant peers for social support and approval and will also lead to increased hostility and emotional reactivity. This can be related to the cognitive biases discussed later, whereby children attribute hostile intentions to others in ambiguous situations (Coie & Miller- Johnson, 2006). Peer rejection can be seen, therefore, as a mediating rather than a causal factor in the emergence of anti-social behaviour (Coie & Miller-Johnson, 2006).

1. 3. The Role of Social Cognition

Of course not all young people who are exposed to risk factors go on to develop conduct problems and it is considered to be the acquisition of certain social information processing patterns that mediate the relation between disposition, temperament, genetic, social and environmental risk factors and conduct disorder outcomes (Dodge & Petit, 2003).

Dodge & Petit (2003) suggest a biopsychosocial model that takes in to account biological factors, socio-cultural factors at the family and community level and

early life experiences, including attachment, parenting, school and peer experiences. These early experiences create social knowledge structured. Within attachment theory these structures are referred to as Internal Working Models and are the representations that the young child creates of themselves and others based on their early attachment experiences. These social knowledge structures govern how social information is processed. For example, children who have been abused are more likely to attribute hostile intentions to others and to respond aggressively (Dodge et al, 1995). In this way, it is the cognitive and emotional processes that act as a proximal mechanism in the development of conduct disorder (Dodge & Petit, 2003).

Aggression can be explained in terms of a bias in the processing of social-cognitive information. As they grow, children develop the skills to understand causalities and the intentions of others and to respond accordingly. From this perspective, aggression can be viewed as a deficiency in socio-cognitive development and, specifically, that aggression is seen as a maladaptive way of solving social problems. Interventions can be tailored to address these aggression biased cognitions, particularly as aggression is likely to become more stable and rewarding as children get older (Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 2005). This occurs because the aggression serves to gain the young person what they want from others or allows the young person the experience of feeling powerful or in control.

Models of social problem solving assume that everyone encounters social problems in their daily life and that they use a set of cognitive skills to find solutions to them. These skills include defining the problem, generating possible solutions and identifying which solution should be implemented. Aggressive children have been found to have hostile attributional biases at the stage of interpreting the problem and deficiencies in the quality and quantity of solutions generated at the information processing stage (reference). In the final stage of deciding an action from a set possible actions, aggressive children show more confidence in their ability to aggress and in the belief that this type of behaviour will help them to achieve their goals (Mathys and Lochman, 2005).

Dodge (1986) presented a five step sequential model for processing social information and formulating a response. Deficits or biases at any of the five levels, it is proposed, can lead to aggressive behaviour. The first of these five steps involves encoding social cues, this includes selectively attending to relevant information and seeking additional information where needed. The second step is the representation and interpretation of the cues, enabling the individual to define the problem and select goals. The third step is that of response search and draws on an individual's ability to generate alternative solutions to a social problem. At step four the model proposes that the individual makes a decision about the response after giving consideration to the consequences of the various responses and then

prioritising the solutions in terms of the likelihood of them being effective so that a decision can be made. The fifth stage is then the enactment of the response.

This has been supported by evidence that preadolescent and adolescent aggressive boys have significantly more difficulties with cue recall, peer attribution and problem solving (Lochman & Dodge, 1994). Slaby and Guerra (1988), split 144 adolescents into three comparison groups, one made up of incarcerated antisocial and aggressive adolescents, one group of students in the community rated as being at high risk of aggression and one group of adolescents within the community rated as being at low risk of aggression. The study compared the group in terms of two cognitive mediators; skills in social problem solving and beliefs supporting the use of aggression as a response to social problems. Anti-social and aggressive adolescents were found to be most likely, and low risk adolescents least likely, to seek solutions to social problems in hostile ways, adopting hostile goals, seeking little additional information, generating few alternative solutions, expecting few consequences for aggressive responses and choosing few best and second best solutions that were considered to be effective by others. Furthermore, anti-social aggressive adolescents were most likely to hold beliefs that aggression is a legitimate response that allows the individual to increase their self-esteem and avoid a negative image without leading to suffering for the victim. This suggests that as well as deficits in social problem solving, cognitive distortions or biases influence the views of adolescents in reflecting on their aggressive behaviour.

1. 4 Interventions for Offending Behaviour

1.4. 1 What Works?

The What Works debate in relation to interventions for young offenders has been dominant for over four decades but in particular from the mid 1980's when there was a move away from the belief that 'nothing works' towards an understanding that interventions can be effective in certain circumstances.

There is increasing evidence for the proposition that the rates of re-offending can be reduced but not through traditional punitive measures. Rather, the evidence suggests that those interventions that work address the causal and contributory factors in offending behaviour. In fact, it is increasingly apparent that punishment and, in particular, imprisonment, can have a destructive effect and can increase the risk of re-offending. From a review of the literature, McGuire and Priestley (1995) present a series of conditions that must be met for a punishment to be effective in reducing the risk of re-offending. Firstly, the punishment must be inevitable so that the offending behaviour is always followed by a punishment. However, low detection and conviction rates mean that punishment is far from guaranteed and offenders continue to offend, drawing on their own experiences of offending without consequences. Secondly, for punishment to be effective it must be immediate in following the offending behaviour. In the current climate, a protracted legal process mean that punishment usually occurs months following the offence. Thirdly, those punishments that are most severe are considered to be most

effective but would be unethical in today's society. Fourthly, the success of punishment in reducing re-offending is dependent on the availability of alternative behaviours, that is that the individual would have developed skills to achieve their desired goals without offending. Finally, the success of punishment relies on comprehensibility, that is, that the punishment should be understood in relation to the offence that preceded it. If this is absent, the offender is likely to increase his anti-social behaviours and his view of society as unjust and himself as being excluded and victimised, while others escape punishment. The authors conclude that *'the notion that punishment can reduce the rate of crime in society is little more than an irrational and unfounded hope'* (McGuire & Priestly, 1995, p14).

Lipsey (1995) conducted a meta-analysis of nearly 400 studies that investigated the effectiveness of interventions for young offenders. He found that, in general, rates of recidivism in those who had received a target treatment compared with controls showed a 10% reduction in re-offending. In addition to re-offending, many studies including in the meta-analysis measured outcomes on other variables, including psychological measures, interpersonal adjustment, school participation, academic achievement and vocational accomplishment and all showed some level of positive effect in the treatment groups compared with control. On the basis of this, Lipsey concluded that treatment for young offenders can be effective although there is large variability across studies and interventions. Lipsey identified those factors that differentiate an intervention yielding larger results from smaller results. Those with higher levels of risk or severity of offending were found to have larger levels

of reductions than those at lower risk. Treatment characteristics were found to have a strong relationship with the size of effect. The most effective treatments were found to be those with concrete behaviour and skills oriented aims, while those that focused on various types of counselling were found to be least effective.

In a paper commissioned by Audit Scotland in 2002, *What Works for Young Offenders* (Whyte, 2003) a number of guidelines for effective interventions based on an extensive review of the literature were outlined. It was recommended that programmes should target those at sufficiently high risk of re-offending. In line with Lipsey's (1995) findings, intensive services for those at low risk are considered unhelpful and likely to draw young people into formal services and use scarce resources unnecessarily. Interventions should address the characteristics associated with offending that are dynamic and where there is the potential to support change. Community based programmes are considered to be more successful than those delivered in an institution setting, in terms of better and longer lasting outcomes.

Whyte (2003) further recommended that programme integrity should be maintained. This refers to delivering a programme as it is planned and designed to avoid programme drift from the aims and objectives that should be guided by theoretical principles. This also refers to ensuring that facilitators do not undermine the goals of the group by failing to model positive and respectful attitudes and behaviours. The programme should be responsive in that it should be delivered in a

way that addresses the learning styles and abilities of the young people involved. Finally, the programme should use a skills based approach, such as cognitive behavioural or social skills training rather than a non-directive relationship focused or psychodynamic approaches which are less effective as an intervention to reduce the risk of re-offending.

1.4.2. Efficacy of Group Based Interventions

Guerran and Slaby (1990) evaluated a 12 week intervention programme developed on a model of social cognitive development to address those cognitive factors associated with aggression. 120 participants were involved in either the cognitive mediation training, an attention control group or a no treatment group. The results indicated that compared with both control groups, the treatment group showed an increased capacity for social problem solving, a decrease in their endorsement of beliefs supporting aggression and a decline in aggressive, impulsive and inflexible behaviours as rated by staff. The results suggest that, rather than aggression being a stable behaviour, it can be directly changed in individuals by directly addressing the specific social- cognitive skills and beliefs that are central to the regulation of aggression in individuals.

A cognitive behavioural group intervention for aggressive males conducted by Kastner (1998) revealed that adolescents reported significant changes in their attentional problems, mood and anxiety, behaviour and somatic complaints as well as their views of their intellectual and school achievement, suggesting that group

interventions can play an important role in helping young people at risk of re-offending to alter their maladaptive attributional styles and issues of interpersonal conflict (Kastner, 1998).

The Equip programme (Gibbs et al., 1995) incorporated Positive Peer Culture (PPC) and Aggression Replacement Training (ART). PPC involves adult led, youth run small treatment groups that aim to moving to young people on from anti-social behaviour to behaviour that enables them to help and support each other. However, such interventions have been shown to be ineffective in reducing offending behaviours and it is considered that this is because the programme does not address those deficits in social skills and moral reasoning already discussed. EQUIP therefore supplements the PPC framework with aspects of ART. This approach incorporates social skills training, anger management and moral education, delivered within the PPC group framework. ART uses a cognitive behavioural approach that focuses on the links between thoughts, emotions and behaviours and encourages the development of skills to break entrenched patterns of behaviour and responding. There is also a focus on moral education that aims to help the young offenders to 'catch up' on 'developmental lags' in moral reasoning (Leeman, Gibbs & Fuller, 1993; Cramer & Kelly, 2004). Leeman et al. (1993) found that this intervention effected significant social and behavioural gains compared to control groups and that these gains were evident twelve months after the young person's release from an institution.

1.4.3. Iatrogenic Effects

'An important aim of an evidence based approach to practice is to support the ethical principle that one should not intervene in the lives of children and young people without having some demonstrable reason for believing that the intervention is likely to be effective, however defined, or at least that it will do no harm' (Whyte, 2003).

A concern regarding group work interventions for young offenders is that bringing together a group of anti-social youths may promote bonds and alliances amongst them, and in this environment anti-social behaviours may be promoted and reinforced rather than reduced. Negative peer groups are known to play a significant role in the initiation, maintenance and escalation of youth behaviour problems and, therefore, a group delivery format may unintentionally promote the behaviour they were aiming to address (Rhule, 2005).

Dishion and colleagues have demonstrated the reinforcing nature of delinquent dyads and the impact this has on delinquent development. Dishion, McCord and Poulin (1999) report on a series of studies they conducted involving the 206 boys from the Oregon Youth Study. The boys were videotaped in 25 minute problem solving discussions with their peers and the topics were coded as rule breaking or normative. The reactions received were coded as being a positive response or neutral. The study found that the delinquent groups were more likely to reinforce rule breaking dyads with laughter and were less likely to reward normative topics. The opposite was true for non-delinquent youths who reacted more positively to non-delinquent dyads and were less likely to laugh in response to rule breaking

dyads. Dishion et al. (1999) defined the process of contingent positive reinforcement for rule breaking discussions as deviancy training. At follow up, these young people showed an increased probability of tobacco, marijuana and alcohol initiation at 15-16 if friendships at 13-14 were characterised by deviancy training and deviancy training. This group was also identified as being at increased risk of self-reported delinquency from ages 14 to 16 years.

It is hypothesised that these processes are likely to operate in group settings and Dishion et al, (1999) recommends against amalgamating anti-social peers in group based interventions because of the increased risk of iatrogenic effects. However, it is of note that these studies occur in an artificial laboratory setting and the dyads occur between boys who consider their partner to be their best friend. This suggest that they may have pre-existing patterns of engagement and anticipate reinforcement. It is also of note that the young people are permitted to continue in their patterns of engagement in this experimental setting. In a rare qualitative study, Kapp (2000) investigated the experience of eight adult male prisoners on their experiences in the juvenile justice system. It is of note that this study was limited to adults in prison and, therefore, is likely to be representative of those who had less positive juvenile intervention experiences given their trajectories. However, all of the participants were critical of their experiences in peer counselling group interventions. Furthermore, a significant trend emerged that indicated that staff in these groups were perceived as not monitoring or influencing constructive or positive peer interactions.

The utility and transferability of these findings to all peer group interventions is questionable. This does, highlight, however, the need to limit the 'unrestricted interactions' of anti-social peers and for caution and consideration when planning, implementing and evaluating group based interventions.

This also points to a need in the literature for rigorous, randomly assigned studies that measure specific effects of peer aggregation under different circumstances and in different interventions (Gifford-Smith et al., 2005). It is of note that a number of interventions have been found to be ineffective or to have negative effects. In a meta-analysis of 500 studies, Sherman et al. (1998) found those studies that were ineffective were activity and leisure based or peer counselling. Of interest would be the mediating effect of structure and supervision in group interventions in relation to the influence of deviancy training and to identify the processes under which the effect of contagion can be minimised.

Furthermore, the complex, challenging and potentially harmful impact of group work interventions for young people at risk of re-offending calls for these interventions to be delivered by enthusiastic, empathic and appropriately trained staff with skills in motivating and with the ability to be firm and rigorous without being punitive or confrontational (McGuire, 2005).

1.4. 4. Appraisal of Existing Research

Existing research within the field of offending, including youth offending and the debate around ‘what works’ has been over-reliant upon quantitative methodologies. The literature has attempted to identify those aspects of interventions that have been successful by measuring rates of recidivism or by quantifying acquired skills as rated by the young people or those who work with them. However, this methodological approach can miss capturing the richness of the experience under investigation and little attention has been paid to the experience for the individuals involved and how they have understood and integrated their experience within the context of their lives. Qualitative studies and meta-analytic studies that attempt to draw together this heterogeneous data can result in interventions being differentiated by imposing categorisations based on the characteristics of the intervention and the client group, such as age, gender and level of risk. This approach, therefore, fails to address the more dynamic personal and social factors that are important in determining an individual’s risk of re-offending (Losel, 1995). Thus, while quantitative approaches add to our knowledge of ‘what works’ they fail to provide a richer understanding of the process in terms of ‘how, where and when’ interventions effect change (McNeill, 2002).

This represents a gap in the literature that has been recognised (McNeill, 2002; Manura, 2000) and qualitative studies are beginning to emerge in this area. Frost (2004) employed grounded theory to analyse engagement styles in adult sex

offenders involved in a group treatment program where they were challenged to disclose the details of their offences. This approach enabled the distinction between disclosure management styles using video recordings of the intervention. However, this study was concerned primarily with the processes around engagement rather than the experience or views of the individuals involved. Barriers to positive mental health and accessing support in a young offenders institution has been investigated using qualitative methodology in males aged 18 to 21 years (Woodall, 2007) and in adult males who have been released from prison (Howerton et al, 2007). However, there are no studies that focus on their experience of receiving input for mental health problems.

A unique study was conducted by Hazel et al. (2002) that sought to understand the experience of young people, aged 12 to 17 years, involved in the youth justice system. This focused on the young people's experience of having contact with police, social work and included their experiences of being charged, spending time in jail and attending court. As would be expected, given the nature of these occurrences, the experience was primarily negative and characterized by the young people feeling frustrated, angry and having no control over what happened to them.

In general, young people of 16 years or younger are not represented in the literature and there are no studies that specifically ask young people at risk of re-offending about their views or experiences of a group based intervention. This age range has been particularly neglected by researchers despite the recognition that

earlier intervention is the most effective way to address offending behaviour and prevent young people entering the adult criminal justice system (Whyte, 2003).

The current study aims to develop an understanding of the experience of young people at risk of re-offending and to derive from this the factors that are meaningful and relevant to their experience. The study was particularly concerned with giving the young people who had participated in this intervention a voice to share their views and experiences. The study also aimed to acknowledge the capacity of young people at risk of re-offending to inform those who attempt to design, plan and implement interventions to target offending behaviour.

1.5. The Changing Direction Group

The Changing Directions intervention has been developed from the key elements of the 'Equipping Youths to help one Another' (EQUIP; Gibbs & Potter, 1987). This programme aimed to encourage pro-social attitudes and behaviours and moral reasoning. The EQUIP programme was developed for use with young offenders in America who were detained in medium security institutions but the key elements have been adapted for implementation in this community based intervention with young offenders living in Fife.

The programme was designed for young people considered to be at moderate to high risk of re-offending. Young people were assessed using the Youth Level of Service, the How I Think (HIT) Questionnaire (Barrigo, et al., 2001) and the Adolescent Anger Rating Scale (AARS, McKinnie, 2001). This provides a comprehensive assessment of family, social, academic, medical and historical risk factors that takes in to account onset of behavioural difficulties, course and severity as well attitudes and beliefs held by the young person about offending behaviour and victim awareness. Every young person involved in the Youth Justice Team has a designated Social Worker and they completed the above assessment procedure and included the results in their referral to the group. At that point individual consideration was given to the risk factors, criminogenic need and the compatibility of the potential group members. For example, young people who attended the same school or associated with the same peer group were not included in the same group. This was to ensure confidentiality within the group and to

reduce the possibility of power imbalances or pre-existing negative peer alliances to impact on the intervention. Further to this the young peoples' interactions were supervised and supported at all times during the group, including break time, to reduce the risk of anti-social interactions and to increase the opportunities for pro-social modeling and the reinforcement of positive and desirable behaviour.

The intervention was a 13 week group programme. The group met once a week for 2 hours. The group work focused on offence analysis of each individual's own offences. This was done within a cognitive behavioural framework and with a focus on social problem solving. Social problem solving is a key component of the work undertaken in the group. A key principle in the development of interventions for young people at risk of re-offending is that of responsivity, that is that the style of work matches the learning style of the young person (McGuire, 1995). The current intervention has been designed with this in mind and the content is participatory and active rather than didactic. Different modalities and activities were used to support learning. This included the use of video clips, quizzes, case studies and storyboards. Given the risk of programme drift and of the iatrogenic effects described above, the programme was tightly structured with clear and explicit aims for each session (Appendix 6.1) in line with guidelines for programme integrity (Hollins, 1995).

Aim of Intervention

The intervention aimed to reduce recidivism by addressing the endorsement of beliefs supporting anti-social, aggressive and offending behaviour and to increase the capacity for social problem solving and moral reasoning

The process also aims to build the young people's confidence and sense of self-efficacy, in terms of controlling their behaviour and, in turn, controlling their future (McIvor, 2002).

1.6. Rationale for the Study

1.6.1. Qualitative Evaluation

The design of the study has evolved from ongoing routine service evaluation whereby all participants in group interventions conducted within the Fife Youth Justice Strategy Team are asked to complete standardised questionnaires at the beginning and end of the group work programme. The young people involved in the Changing Directions group work programme completed the 'How I Think' Questionnaire (Barrigo et al, 2001) and the Adolescent Anger Rating Scale (McKinnie, 2001) at the beginning and at the end of the thirteen-week programme so that changes in the cognitive processes associated could be measured (Wileman, 2006, unpublished findings). While these results were mostly positive and suggest that the intervention is successful in achieving the goal of reducing the cognitive distortions, or 'thinking errors', and anti-social attitudes associated with re-offending, these quantitative tools provide little further information as to why some

young people display more or less change than others, what factors other than offence related cognitive patterns may be being addressed within the group and how the young person understands and makes sense of their experience of attending the group as well as any changes in their life as a result and the factors that impact upon it. There has been little investigation of these factors with these types of interventions and this client group.

The 'what works' literature has been criticized for focusing on a medical model that seeks to identify a treatment and apply a formula to calculate a dosage of intervention that will cure the problem of offending behaviour (McNeill, 2002). However, a broader focus on where, when and how an intervention can support desistance is equally valuable and will complement and support what is already known about the most effective aspects of treatment. Manura (2000) suggest that, in order to marry the two areas, it is necessary to add to what is already known by taking an 'individual- level view'.

Qualitative research aims to provide a richer account of the phenomenon under investigation rather than quantifying particular occurrences or measuring the size of associations. In this way, qualitative research can complement quantitative methods (Yardley, 2000). Such methods are considered to be particularly useful when the area of study is novel or under-researched and the primary interest is in better understanding a process rather than measuring outcome (Smith and Dunworth, 2003). These criteria fits with the aims of the current study, since the

aim is to explore the experience of an intervention rather than to measure it's efficacy. This aspect of the intervention has received little attention and is increasingly recognised as a gap in our knowledge and understanding of the complex process of change that occurs when an intervention is successful. McNeill (2002) emphasises the need, within the field of youth offending, for:

'Qualitative research that stresses the significance of subjective changes in the person's sense of self and identity, reflected in changing motivations, greater concern for others and changing opinions' (McNeill, 2002, p. 1)

By failing to ask for the participant's views and experience we can only make assumptions on an intervention's value and utility.

Client's reports are a rich and relatively untapped source of information. After all, it is their experience, theirs alone, and the further we move from the client's experience, the more inferential are our conclusions (Yalom, 2005, p.4).

1.6.2. User Involvement / Service Evaluation

Within research, children are not frequently asked for their views and opinions about their experiences. Those who are included in research are often those children with good communication skills, school attendance and achievement and gaps are recognised in gaining the perspective of more 'hard to reach' young people (Curtis et al., 2004).

The Scottish Needs Assessment Programme (SNAP) on Children and Adolescent Mental Health was commissioned in 2000 and published in 2003 and identified, as one of three major themes, the need to put service users at the centre of service delivery and service redesign.

1.7. Aims of the Study

1.7.1. Primary Aims

- To explore the experiences that young people at risk of re-offending have of attending a group intervention programme led jointly by Clinical Psychology and Social Work.
- To identify what factors impact on how the young people experience the intervention.
- To explore what impact attendance at the group has had on the young people's lives during and after their attendance at the programme.

1.7.2 Secondary Aims

- To identify ways in which the experience of the participants can inform future areas of research and service development.

2. METHODOLOGY

In the following chapter, the design methodology applied to the research will be described along with the ethical considerations and issues of quality and rigour that are specific to qualitative approaches.

2.1 Design

The study was designed to meet the aims outlined in Chapter One. As the study aimed to explore the experience of a small group of participants in detail, a qualitative approach was considered to be most appropriate. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was chosen as the qualitative methodology to be applied after consideration of the aims of the study and its capacity to take in to account the active role of the researcher, who was well known to the participants and had supported the intervention under investigation.

IPA, as its name suggests, is concerned with understanding a phenomenon. The phenomenon refers to an individual's perception of an object or event, within a particular context and at a given time and is not an attempt to produce an objective statement of that object or experience. IPA takes in to account the role of the researcher in interpreting or making sense of what is shared (Smith and Dunworth, 2003). While IPA seeks to explore the research participants' experiences from their perspective, it acknowledges that such explorations are influenced by the researcher and his or her view of the world, as well as the nature of the interaction

between the researcher and the participant. IPA is appropriate where the study seeks to gain access to the participants' thoughts and beliefs about an object or experience. By allowing the researcher to gain perspective on the participants' view of their world, IPA permits the researcher to gain a greater degree of understanding in to the phenomenon under investigation. IPA recognises that the research itself is a dynamic process whereby the researchers thoughts and beliefs are required to make sense and interpret that other world (Smith, 1996). IPA is, therefore, an interpretation by the researcher of the participants experience and it is accepted that the researcher can never gain direct access to the participants' world (Willig, 2001).

Because IPA is an inductive approach, where the participant is considered to be the expert in their own experience, it does not seek to test hypotheses and avoids entering in to research dictated by prior assumptions (Reid, Flowers and Larkin, 2005). Hypotheses are claims made by a researcher to drive the research. In quantitative research, empirical evidence is tested so that the hypothesis can then be accepted or rejected. Qualitative researcher aims to explore phenomenon and, where possible, provide explanations and descriptions. This process is driven by questions that identify the process, entity or object under investigation (Willig, 2001).

There are numerous approaches to qualitative research and, after consideration, IPA was selected as the most appropriate method of qualitative data analysis for

this study. There were a number of reasons for this selection. Firstly, the researcher was known to the young people and had been involved in the group experience under investigation. This relationship was considered to facilitate the interview process by providing familiarity and consistency for young people who are, very often, difficult to reach and may struggle to engage with an unknown interviewer. Furthermore, any attempts by the researcher to remain neutral within the interview would have created an unnatural interaction given the shared experience and may have been detrimental to the study. However, it was necessary to select a method of analysis that incorporated the role of the researcher and allowed this to be acknowledged and explored. Secondly, consideration was given to the likelihood of bias imposed by the researcher or compliance on the part of the young people. It was decided that it would be most appropriate to interview each person in isolation and then to bring the data together to search for commonalities and differences. Qualitative methods whereby the themes from one interview inform the next were not used because of a desire to allow each person to explore their own experience guided by the same semi-structured interview. Thirdly, the aim of the study was to explore the shared experience of a phenomenon in a small, finite group of people. IPA, as described above, is considered to be particularly suited where this is the study aim (McCaslin & Scott, 2003).

2.2 Participants

Participants were attendees of two consecutively run Changing Directions groups. Participants were interviewed between eight and twelve months after their

attendance at the group. Four young people completed the first group and four young people completed the second group. Six young people participated in the study. Three were participants from each of the two groups. The other remaining two young people who attended the group but did not participate were both believed to have left the area since participating in the intervention. Two young people were 14 years old when they attended the intervention and four were 15 years old at the time of completing the intervention. All had at least three episodes of offending in the previous six months or at least one serious offence. All of the young people were considered to be at moderate to high risk of re-offending. At the time of attending the group, two of the young people were in alternative education provisions and the remaining four were in mainstream school on reduced timetables and receiving behaviour support. In all cases, non-attendance at school and behavioural problems at school were an area of concern.

Data was also gathered from two Social Workers within the team who facilitated the group work programme along with the researcher. Both of the groups from which participants were drawn were facilitated by the same experienced facilitators. This was considered to add to the consistency of the experience under investigation and programme integrity of the intervention.

2.3. Procedure

2.3.1. Recruitment of Participants

All research participants had completed attendance at the thirteen week Changing Directions intervention in the past year. Interviews took place between eight and twelve months after the young people completed the intervention. All of the young people were informed during the group that they would be invited to participate in the study. At the end of the group, the young people were provided with a Participant Information Sheet. In the case of young people under the age of sixteen, Parent Information Sheets were also provided.

The researcher was available as a contact and to answer any questions during and after the research. Full contact details were provided to each participant of the researcher as well as their clinical and academic supervisor.

The researcher contacted the young people to ask if they had made a decision about participating in the study. All young people agreed to participate. However, it was made explicit that the study was optional and that they would be free to withdraw at any time.

2.3.2. Interview Format

Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire as is recommended for this approach (Smith, 1996). This allowed the researcher to hear the participant talk about aspects of their life and their experiences. This is considered to be more

conducive to the aims of the approach than a structured questionnaire because it allows flexibility and the development of rapport. The participant, the expert of their own experience, has the opportunity to tell their own story and to bring things to light that the researcher will not have expected. Within this, the researcher is then able to probe further in to those areas that arise from what the participant has reported of their thoughts, interests and concerns and to gain a rich description of the participants' experience (Smith and Osborne, 2003).

The questions were open-ended and intended to function as a trigger that encouraged the participant to talk about their experiences. The participants' comments were also used during the interview and were either reflected back or incorporated in to questions to expand on a new area. This served to enhance coherence and continuity in the interview as well as providing an opportunity for the interviewer to demonstrate that they were listening and check that they have correctly understood what the participant is sharing (Willig, 2001).

In preparation for and during the interview consideration was given to each participant's language and levels of concentration and attention.

The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed and it is acknowledged that individuals were aware of being audio-taped and of this being a new experience for the participants. It was considered to have an impact on the rapport and improved

as the interview developed and the participants felt more comfortable in the interview conditions.

2.3.3. Interview Setting

Young people were given the choice of being interviewed in their own home or being transported to the researcher's place of work for interview. Two young people chose to be interviewed at home and four young people were transported to the researcher's place of work for interview.

2.4. Data Analysis

Analysing the data with IPA involves examining the transcripts closely and one by one. This idiographic approach meant that the researcher worked closely and intensively with each transcript individually and these are only integrated at a later stage of the research (Smith and Osborn, 2003).

At the first stage of analysis the transcripts were read and re-read and notes were recorded by hand on copies of the transcript. These notes were made in the left hand margin. These notes were unfocused and wide ranging and included observations, questions and summaries as well as associations, connections, differences and amplifications that emerge throughout each transcript (Smith and Osborn, 2003; Willig, 2004). An example of the initial stage of coding is provided in Appendix (Appendix 6.8).

The subsequent stages were conducted using NVivo 7 (QSR International Pty. Ltd., 1999-2007), a computer programme that supports qualitative research processes. Using this package the researcher was able to increase their rigour in counting the number of a sources and references attached to each emerging theme. This avoids anecdotes within themes and is recommended as a means of ensuring consistent coding (Silverman, 2000). NVivo allowed the researcher to insert memos and begin to collate themes. NVivo holds pieces of data that have been identified as sharing a common theme together. The memos allowed the researcher to introduce theoretical perspectives and links to literature from the emerging themes within the data.

The following stages of analysis, therefore, involved putting the data in to the NVivo package and beginning a process of identifying possible emerging themes in the transcript. In the second stage of analysis, initial notes are transformed in to concise words or phrases that captured the experience being described. After the initial transcript had been coded, subsequent transcripts were taken in turn and the initial stage of engaging with the transcript and making notes by hand was conducted. These notes included observations of similarities or differences with previous participants' descriptions of their experiences. At stage two, when initial labeling occurred, if a participant's experience was shared and a theme label that was considered appropriate had already been created, this term was used. In this way, super-ordinate themes were expanded as the transcripts were analysed in turn. This stage begins to use theoretical terminology and memos are made when

something in the transcript reflected something in the related literature. During this process the researcher continually referred back to the original transcripts to ensure that the interpretations remained grounded in the participant's narratives of their experience.

The third stage of analysis involved introducing structure by creating clusters for the related themes and giving these clusters and themes labels that captured their essence and illustrated the experience of the participants. This was done by referring back to the original transcripts frequently. Each transcript was taken in turn and analysed using this process. After the transcripts had been coded and emerging themes identified, the transcripts were analysed in terms of the individuals' experiences and then considered in relation to the group themes to allow for consideration of common and conflicting experiences. In the fourth stage of analysis, these clusters are named and come to represent a super-ordinate theme. Finally, a summary of super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes was produced that included the structured clusters of themes and each theme had a document with the quotations that illustrated each (see Appendix 6.9). At this stage the researcher made decisions about which super-ordinate themes most reflected the experiences described by the participants, based on prevalence and richness of the accounts.

2.5. Issues of Quality Control

The traditional criteria by which the quality of a piece of quantitative research is measured are not applicable to qualitative research because of the vast difference

in the purpose of the two types of enquiry. While quantitative researchers are concerned with having a large enough sample size to be statistically representative, qualitative research is concerned with studying a small selection of people with a particular attribute or experience. Qualitative techniques generate large amounts of data for each participant and this must remain manageable for the researcher. Huge amounts of data would be overwhelming to a researcher and the individual experiences of the participants would be lost (Willig, 2001).

Because qualitative research is relatively new, it is without the well established conventions, methods and terminology of quantitative research. The measures for judging good quantitative research do not apply to qualitative techniques because of the differences in the approaches. While quantitative research methods can answer questions about the stability or generality or isolating, controlling and predicting variables, qualitative research focuses on understanding the foundations of a phenomenon for a small number of people within a given context (Yardley, 2000).

The difficulties encountered by qualitative research in demonstrating integrity in their studies and how this was addressed in the current study are addressed below.

2.5.1. Validity

Demonstrating validity can be problematic in qualitative research because of the challenge of ensuring that the research answers the question while ensuring that the

findings demonstrate the participants' experiences and not the researchers own beliefs.

This was incorporated into the interviews by checking with the participants that what they reported was being understood correctly and providing them with opportunities to challenge or correct the researcher assumptions. As the interviews took place in real life settings, either the individuals own home or in the researcher's place of work and the setting for the intervention, the effects of creating an artificial setting were avoided and ecological validity was considered to be higher (Willig, 2001).

Reflexivity is considered to be of particular importance in qualitative research to ensure that the researcher continuously reviews their role in the research process and discourages the researcher from imposing meaning, thus protecting the validity of the work. This process is described later in the chapter.

2.5.2. Reliability

The need to produce the same outcome on different occasion is less relevant to qualitative research as the approach seeks to examine a particular phenomenon at a particular time in a given context. There is considerable disagreement about the role of inter-rater reliability in qualitative research. Some argue that if applied appropriately and rigorously then the same findings should be generated irrespective of who carries out the research (Willig, 2001) using a process where

more than one researcher codes the data in an attempt to reach consensus, known as investigator triangulation (Giles, 2002). However, others would argue that inter-rater reliability to check the objectivity in a coding scheme is meaningless to an approach where the researcher is viewed as an integral part of the research process and has a role in shaping the outcome of the research that is acknowledged and managed throughout because they bring their own purpose and perspective to the research. There are concerns that attempts to pre-define rules for coding to create reliability would, in fact, limit the opportunity for the researcher to explore the data and make context sensitive interpretations (Yardley, 2000). There is also a danger that the researcher's role in interpreting the data, inherent to IPA would be lost, as would the coherence of the findings if there was concern with reaching a group consensus (Giles, 2002).

2.5.3. Triangulation

Despite the concerns outlined above, investigator triangulation was achieved by involving another investigator to code samples of the data and verify the emerging themes. Furthermore, triangulation, involving collecting and analysing data from more than one source was introduced in to the process of investigating the experience by including the experiences of other sources, known as data triangulation (Giles, 2002). This was achieved by interviewing the group facilitators to gain their view of the experience.

In addition, literature and theoretical sources were used to verify the emerging themes and incorporated in the relevant descriptions in the following chapters from different theoretical perspectives, termed theoretical triangulation (Giles, 2002).

2.5.4. Principles for good qualitative research

Yardley (2000) suggests four characteristics of good qualitative research and these were used as a means of managing the issue of quality control in the current study.

2.5.4.1. Sensitivity to context

It is considered to be the responsibility of the researcher to have an understanding of the theoretical context of their study, both in terms of the use of similar methods within the field and of research in the area under investigation. Interpretation is an integral part of IPA and differentiates a study from one that simply categorizes data. Knowledge of the background to the categories and distinctions are essential to develop our understanding of the phenomenon. In order to interpret data, knowledge of the theoretical context is crucial to link the piece of work with the work of others and to identify its usefulness for future research and service development.

Yardley (2000) also emphasises the importance of the researcher having an awareness of the socio-cultural setting with which the research takes place. In the current study, the researcher had been on placement within the field for eighteen months and had worked closely with the client group. . This enabled the researcher

to interpret the data in line with the norms, values and expectations of the participant. An understanding of the experiences of this client group in other aspects of their lives allows more detailed exploration of their experience within the group and consideration of how this compares and contrasts.

A further aspect is sensitivity to the social context and the relationship between the researcher and the participant and the inevitable imbalance of power. An intrinsic part of the IPA design is to consider the general and specific effects of the researcher and the method was selected accordingly.

2.5.4.2. Commitment and Rigour

Commitment refers to the length and depth of the researcher's engagement with the topic and the skills they develop in order to carry out the research and use the data effectively, both theoretically and empirically. Rigour refers to the researcher's capacity to reach a complete data set and to analyse it comprehensively.

This is demonstrated with a complete interpretation that emphasises the themes and sub-themes but also seeks to draw out the variations and complexities to go beyond superficial and simplistic interpretations. The current study also included the group facilitators in the research to provide triangulation. Data from this additional source was included to gain a wider perspective on the topic and provide a multi-layered understanding of the topic that goes beyond a single perspective.

2.5.4.3. Transparency and Coherence

Transparency and coherence ensure that the process of analysis is available to others and the results and the path that led the researcher to them can be traced. It is acknowledged in qualitative research that the researcher's internal processes are seen as part of the research context and the meaning given to interpretations. Data collected using qualitative methods are vulnerable because of the process by which the data is collected and bias imposed by the researcher. It is a challenge for interviewers to draw out other's experiences and perceptions without influencing them.

The nature of qualitative research is embedded in concepts of power and the relationship that the participant has with researcher. Where the researcher is known to the participants it may mean the results are richer and interviews more flexible because of the trust and familiarity that already exists. However, the potential that this has to limit interviews and the possible impact on validity, reliability and meaningfulness cannot be ignored (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wyneden, 2001).

The aim of a qualitative study is not to provide a seamless account of their interviews and interpretations, but to allow others to follow the development in their thinking and, in doing so, to make their links transparent to ensure a critical and open-minded approach. This fits well with the IPA approach, whereby, the process of the research and of the researcher's role in interpreting the participants' views are seen as key to the process and made explicit (Smith, 1996).

By keeping a diary of the process of the research, the researcher was able to reflect on their role as an active part of the process and to follow the course of the research, including their reading and planning, data collection, data analysis and their reactions to each aspect (Silverman, 2000). It is hoped that this will allow the reader to make decisions about the truthfulness and consistency of research by following a clear audit trail of the research process and the decisions made along the way as well as allowing and ensuring that the researcher reflected on their own values, preconceptions and behaviours and how they have affected the interviews and the subsequent interpretations. The reader is then able to assess the influences of such factors (Slevin et al, 1999).

Diaries also allow the researcher to reflect on their role as researcher in comparison to their role as clinician. (Orb et al., 2001). The reflective process can be considered particularly pertinent where the researcher has been involved with the process under investigation. The sense of stepping back and reflecting on the researchers own contribution and experiences as a therapist and a researcher mediates the impact of having conflicting roles (Asselin, 2003). A reflective diary was kept by the researcher throughout the planning, data collection and data analysis stages of this study.

Furthermore, quotations have been used to support each theme and to make clear the process whereby the theme was derived from the participants' descriptions and reflections of their experience.

2.5.4.4. Impact and Importance

As with all research there is an emphasis throughout the design and execution of the study on the implications of the results on practice. The focus on the current study is to gain insight in to the experience of young people with complex social and interpersonal histories who have completed a group based intervention. The purpose of this is to inform future research and service provision.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

2.6.1. Ethical Review

Ethical approval was obtained from Fife and Forth Valley Research and Ethics Committee and management approval from NHS Fife prior to commencing the study (Appendix 6.7).

2.6.2. Obtaining Informed Consent

All participants, and their parents / carers if under the age of 16 years, were given information sheets detailing the aims and procedure of the study (Appendix 6.2 & 6.3). These were presented to the young person in a way that took account of any learning difficulties or literacy issues to ensure the informed choice of the participants. All participants were be given details of the reason for their selection as a potential participant in the study. They were made aware of the potential risks and benefits of taking part in the study.

Participants were given adequate time to read and digest the information sheets before being asked to make a decision on whether they wanted to take part. They were also given the opportunity to discuss any issues that they are unsure about and to ask questions to the researcher, or any other person they chose to discuss the research with.

Participants and their parents / carers if under the age of 16 years were then asked to complete and sign consent forms (Appendix 6.4 & 6.5) if they were happy to take part in the study. They were made aware that they remained free to withdraw from the study at any point.

2.6.3. Ensuring comfort and safety

The participants were asked whether they would prefer to be interviewed at home or in a comfortable private room within the researcher's place of work. If they chose to come to the researcher's place of work then transport arrangements were made for them. Participants were given regular opportunities to have a break and refreshments were made available to them during the interview.

If there had been any indication that the participant was becoming distressed during the interview then it would have been stopped immediately and psychological support would have been offered. If this had occurred the interview would only have continued if the participant was happy with this and if the researcher felt that continuing would not be detrimental to the participant's

emotional well-being. If any participants had become distressed during the interview, they would have been offered appropriate follow up support and given the opportunity to withdraw from the study.

2.6.4. Confidentiality

Participant's confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. All personal identifiers were removed from the data. Each participant was given a code name and number that was used on all data sheets. Only the chief researcher was able to identify the participants by these codes. The codes were held in a locked cabinet separate from the rest of the data and accessible only by the chief researcher. Signed consent forms will also be held separately in a locked cabinet only accessible by the chief researcher. The participants were assured that they would not be identified in this or any future written publication arising from this study. After being transcribed and transcripts were checked for accuracy, all audio recordings were accounted for and then erased.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Socio- Demographic Profile of Participants

For the purpose of ensuring anonymity, all of the participants have been given a pseudonym and they will be referred to by this name throughout the following chapters.

Participant 1

James was fourteen years old when he attended the group. He had been disruptive and threatening in mainstream school and had attended an alternative education resource on a part time basis for eighteen months prior to attending the group. James lived between his parent's home and his grandparent's homes because of difficulties within the family relationships, in particular between James and his father. James was considered to be at high risk of re-offending. His offences were primarily violent in nature. James used alcohol and cannabis regularly.

Participant 2

Gary was fourteen years old when he attended the group. Gary had not attended school for approximately one year prior to attending the group. Gary lived with his mother in cramped and poor housing conditions. His mother had mental health problems and abused alcohol. She struggled to provide adequate supervision or

discipline. He was considered to be at moderate to high risk of re-offending. His offences included burglary, serious assaults, car theft and driving dangerously.

Participant 3

Daryl was fifteen when he attended the group. He was in an alternative education resource on a part time basis because he had struggled in a mainstream school setting. However, his attendance was poor and his behaviour when he did attend meant that he was often excluded. Daryl has ADHD and specific learning difficulties. Daryl lived with his parents who adopted him when he was two years old along with his older sister. His parents were retired professionals who struggled to cope with Daryl's behaviour. Daryl's offences included theft, burglary and assaults. At the time that he attended the group, Daryl's girlfriend was pregnant with his child. Daryl was considered to be at high risk of re-offending.

Participant 4

Dwight was fifteen years old when he attended the group. He had not attended school regularly for approximately two years. When he did attend his behaviour was challenging and he had been excluded frequently. Dwight's offences included driving dangerously without a licence and a series of assaults. Dwight had left the scene of a motorbike crash that he had caused and which had seriously injured a young girl. Dwight lived with his parents and there was a strong family history of criminal behaviour. Dwight was considered to be at moderate to high risk of re-offending.

Participant 5

Matt was fifteen when he attended the group and was using cannabis and alcohol frequently. Matt came from a very unsettled home life. His parents had separated and both had new relationships and younger children. Matt and his step-father clashed frequently and he was often thrown out of his mother's home. His father was reported to be aggressive and critical and so he frequently resided with his grandparents who struggled to supervise him and to cope with his offending behaviour. Matt's attendance at school was poor and he was isolated when he did attend because of his disruptive behaviour. Matt's offences were primarily violent in nature and were frequently associated with drug and alcohol abuse. Matt's offence history indicated that he regularly acquired charges for breach of the peace and had been charged for resisting arrest and assaulting police officers. Matt was considered to be at moderate to high risk of re-offending.

Participant 6

Josh was fifteen years old and lived with both parents in a comfortable home. His parents worked long hours and Josh had a great deal of freedom. Josh's older brother had died in a car crash three years previously. Josh truanted frequently and was on a part time timetable because he struggled with the demands of full time education. Josh used drugs and alcohol frequently and had input from the Youth Drugs Service. His offences included stealing and driving cars dangerously, serious assault and arson. Josh was considered to be at high risk of re-offending

Facilitators

Polly and Anne are social workers who each have several years experience of working in the youth justice setting.

Table 3.1 Levels of Attendance

	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk6	Wk7	Wk8	Wk9	Wk10	Wk11	Wk12	
James	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	100%
Gary	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	100%
Daryl	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√		√	75%
Dwight	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	100%
Matt	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		√	√	83%
Josh	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		√	√	√	83%

The levels of attendance at the group are presented in Table 3.1 for each participant. The level of attendance was considered to be very good and ranged from 75% to 100%. Three of the young people achieved 100% attendance. In addition to the twelve week programme an outing was arranged to mark the ending of the group. All of the young people attended this event.

3.2 Qualitative Findings

From the analysis of interview materials, five super-ordinate themes emerged that captured the participants' descriptions of their experience of participating in the intervention. These super-ordinate themes were Personal Development and Learning; Group membership; Cognitive Shift; Relationship and Ending. Each super-ordinate theme is constructed from a cluster of related sub-ordinate themes. These are presented in Figure 3.1.

In the following section the themes are presented. Each super-ordinate theme is taken in turn and presented in relation to the sub-ordinate themes that contribute to it. Excerpts of the interview transcripts are presented to illustrate the participants' accounts of their experiences. Where relevant, excerpts from the narratives of the group facilitators are presented for the purpose of triangulation.

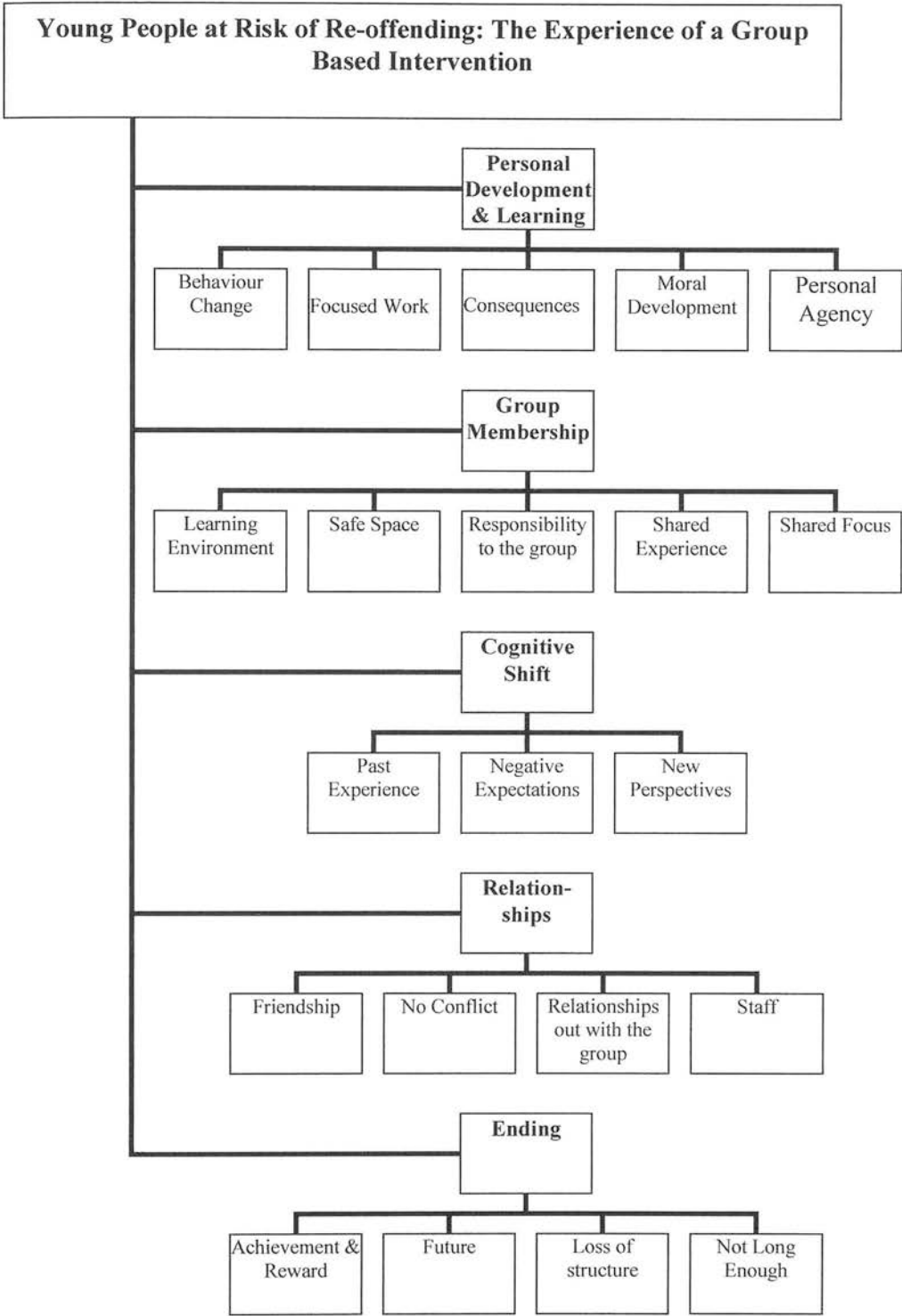


Figure 1: Summary of Super-ordinate and Sub-ordinate Themes.

3.2.1. Personal Development and Learning

All of the young people reported an experience of personal development and learning. This super-ordinate theme is made up of the associated sub-ordinate themes. Each of these are presented in turn below.

Personal Development & Learning

Behaviour Change

Focused work

Consequences

Moral development

Personal Agency

3.2.1.1. Behaviour Change

Each of the six young people interviewed reported that they had made changes to their behaviour and that the changes had resulted in a significant change in their lives. The young people talked about their experience of learning about their behaviours and indicated that an increased knowledge and understanding underpinned future change. This is illustrated in Matt's account:

I got tae learn about how folk behave and why we done it all and how drink affects your behaviour. I didnae think about that before (Matt).

When discussing the process of learning and making changes to behaviours the young people frequently reflected on their past behaviours. It was apparent that an openness and understanding of previous behaviours along with an insight in to the

social and contextual triggers was a key element in the experience and to bringing about change. Josh reflected on the way in which he previously responded to his peers:

I used tae, if somebody told me tae dae somethin' then if they were like, aye, you're a poof, I'd just end up doin' it but now I won't (Josh).

As is demonstrated in the above extract from Josh, frequent comparisons were made between old patterns of behaviour and new ways of responding. Gary reflected on how he would have behaved before attending the intervention and compared this to how he would behave in the same situation now:

if my pals are getting' in tae trouble I would just walk away or go for somebody else and keep out of it like that. Before I would probably go along with them and get in tae trouble and get lifted or whatever (Gary).

Dwight provides an example of how his behaviour changed. This behaviour does not relate directly to offending but highlights his growing understanding of the importance of respect and reciprocity in relationships. Again, Dwight reflects on his behaviour previously and identifies that having the respect of the staff is a direct result of his behaviour and being respectful towards them in the group environment:

The thing about the staff wis respect them and they'll respect you. Before I didnae hae any respect. Like openin' the doors and lettin' them through and that. I'd just let them dae it themselves, But now I dinnae (Dwight).

Anne, in her own descriptions, concurs that the group creates an active learning environment to develop new ways of responding and interacting and she identifies

the importance of focusing on positives and modeling desired behaviour within the group setting to support behaviour change:

We try to focus on the positives, we try to tackle it by modeling good manners and by prompting them to use good manners and when they are using good manners we would focus on that more and praise that, encouraging them and making a fuss of them (Anne).

3.2.1.2. Focused work

The importance of focused work emerged from the young peoples descriptions of attending the group. The participants reflected that the programme differed from other input that they have received for their difficulties from a range of agencies. The young people will have come in to contact with a number of other services before coming to the point of attending the group work programme reflected on this during the interviews. Daryl shares his experience of a previous intervention:

A guy from Sacro, he helped, well, helped but didn't really help enough. He only came out like once every two weeks and sat and had a cup of tea and talked to me and then he'd go away for another two weeks (Daryl).

This suggests that Daryl considers less intrusive and less regular contact, to be less helpful. This excerpt also implies that unfocused work is less clearly defined so that the benefits of such input, if any, are difficult for the young person to identify.

James described a similar view and stated that the group was 'better' while reflecting on previous activity based interventions:

Something I done before, like for bad behaved kids. Like they take you out every week but they didn't talk about

stuff you'd done, they just took you away oot tae have fun. It was jist fun but it didnae help. It was supposed to help but it didnae, it just didnae help 'cause you didnae actually talk about stuff you were actually doin' like you do here (James).

James describes how this previous intervention was not a helpful experience for him because it did not directly address his problem behaviours or the factors associated with it. The implication is that the current intervention helps because it directly focuses on the problem behaviours and factors directly associated with his offending. Again, a lack of clarity about other interventions emerges. There appears to be some confusion as to the purpose other than to have fun and, perhaps, the mixed message that he has received this service as a result of what he is able to identify as his role as a *'bad behaved kid'*.

In similar reflections about previous individual input interventions Josh reflected:

I got to do different things every day. He just asked me what I wanted and I got tae choose what tae dae. It wisnae like daein' work, it wis mare like he would take me places, I went tae the gym a good few times and eh, I wis 'hinkin' aboot goin' in tae the army so he wis makin' me run on the treadmill so I suppose that wis good. I dunno what it done, like to help me stop offending or wi' the cannabis but it was still good (Josh).

This unstructured work seems to create confusion for the young person who is unclear as to what the intervention does to help.

In the following extract, James describes the process of confronting his behaviour by talking about and reflecting upon his offences as being significant in developing new ways of thinking about his actions and in developing empathy for his victims:

Just when I looked back on the charges, I thought to myself, I wouldnae like that to happen to me. Just talkin' about it all, just made me think I didnae want tae dae what I was daein' to people... made all the stuff I'd done look immature (James).

It is implied, therefore, that unfocused work without clear aims that does not provide the opportunity to discuss problem behaviours lacks a key element, identified by participants as contributing to change. The process of reflecting on offending appears, therefore, to be an integral part of the process of learning and development.

The facilitators report a similar experience to the young people in terms of the value they place, as professionals, on the focused nature of the work undertaken at the group. It is suggested that a group setting allows the work to remain focused and uninterrupted by other issues that may come up in the young person's life and family:

I find that the group work programmes get done whereas one to one work so often drags on or gets interrupted and maybe, you know, you so easily go out to see someone for a one to one session and get caught up at home. The thing is that if that young person was in a group, we wouldn't let that interfere with the group, though we'd still deal with it (Polly).

In this way the group work is valued and protected and the structure and focus is retained.

3.2.1.3. Consequences

The sub-ordinate theme of consequences emerged strongly as a key part of the process of learning and developing and emerged in the accounts of all of the young people. Daryl conveys in the following excerpt that he did not consider consequences before attending the group but that this has changed:

I never thought about the consequences until I went to the group, I thought it was all just fun and games, I didnae think there would be consequences. Now I realise that there is (Daryl).

Gary described giving consideration to the impact that his behaviour would have on his life and his future:

I just kinda thought about stuff. Thought about what I was doin' and how my life was goin', where I was gonna end up (Gary).

Matt reported previously having little regard for the consequences of his behaviour because of a lack of concern or value for himself as well as others:

I got tae learn about how folk behave and why we done it all and how drink affects your behaviour. I didnae think aboot that before... I just didnae care, I didnae care what happened tae me or anyone else (Matt).

3.2.1.4. Moral Development

The subordinate theme, moral development emerged throughout the interviews and four of the young people made explicit moral judgements about their own and others' behaviour. In the following excerpts Gary and James consider their own behaviours and make direct and clear judgements about them:

Just 'cause it was wrong and I could see that and I didn't want tae do it anymore (Gary).

Similarly, James reflects on his own behaviour and makes a judgement that it was 'stupid' and 'wrong':

It helped me mature. Grow up. It showed you how serious that some of the stuff was. I thought it was just stupid. A laugh, but it was wrong (James).

In the following excerpt Josh speaks about feeling guilt for his actions and this suggests a level of empathy and unease at his offences. Josh also reflects on how the other young people in the group felt about their actions and suggests that, as a group they shared the experience of feeling remorse after having spoken about their offences.

I felt bad about what I had done though, I think we all did after we spoke about it, it wasnae funny then (Josh).

3.2.1.5. Personal Agency

The sub-ordinate theme of personal agency emerged from the young peoples' descriptions of identifying a need or a desire to take responsibility for their actions and provided examples of how they had achieved this.

In the following excerpts, Josh reported taking responsibility for himself and his own actions and moving away from blaming others or blaming alcohol:

After the group, when you explained, like that folk were makin' me dae 'hings by saing I was a poof, they were makin' me want tae dae it. I had tae prove myself wrong and find other pals (Josh).

the only time was when I was drinking Buckfast, my mum says it makes me go mental (laughs). I get pure aggressive, I'm no blamin' the drink though anymare, I used to always blame it on that but it's up tae me no tae touch it (Josh).

Similarly, Gary described making choices to change his behaviours and feeling in control of these:

if my pals are getting' in tae trouble I would just walk away or go for somebody else and keep out of it like that. Before I would probably go along with them and get in tae trouble and get lifted or whatever (Gary).

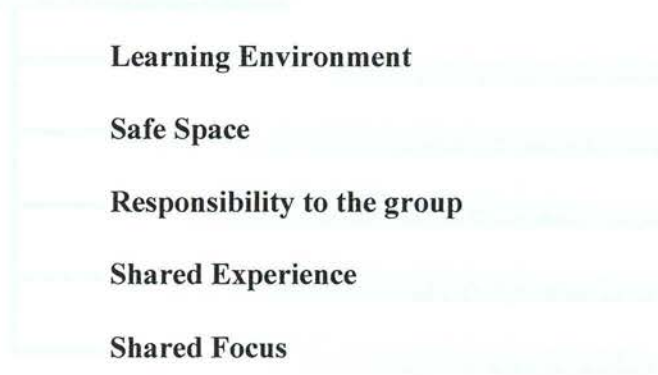
In this excerpt Gary is able to reflect on his previous behaviour and a pattern of following his peers. There is a sense that Gary lacked personal agency or the capacity to go in another direction or behave in a different way from his peers and make decisions based on his welfare. Not only does this indicate a change in Gary's

pattern of behaviours and an increased capacity to walk away, but of an increased value of himself.

3.2.2. Group Membership

The super-ordinate theme ‘group membership’ emerged from the young people’s accounts of their experience of attending the group and of being an active and contributing member in the group as well as the characteristics of the group that supported this process. The five subordinate themes that emerged highlighted the experience of ‘group membership’ and are described below.

Group Membership



3.2.2.1. Learning Environment

The learning environment that group membership afforded emerged through the young people’s accounts of their experiences as being meaningful. The experience of learning together and the differences in the group setting compared to an individual setting emerged during the interviews with all of the young people on their experiences of the intervention. Daryl recognised that the experience was different because the experience was shared and compared it to previous interventions on a one to one basis:

Well only speaking to one person isn’t the same so it was really different from being in a group. The group was

better, I don't know why but after a while I enjoyed it better, working with social work around other people, not just me (Daryl).

Gary describes in the following excerpt that the process was interactive and shared and this supported the process of learning:

cos some aw the things they had said, I was like, nah, I widnae a done that. But then when I spoke aboot what I'd done they'd dae the same thing. Made you think (Gary).

In a similar account, Josh reflects that interactive nature of the group supported reflection and listening and implies that he has previously been resistant to discussing his behaviour. In this way the group is different because it's interactive as opposed to didactic and the young people have an active role that supports understanding rather than feeling that they are being criticized or told what to do by an adult:

you learn a lot a 'hings, aboot, like, the 'hings that you've been dain', like what you've done wrang, like usually when people try tae tell you you always 'hink you're right, but like, when I wis at the group, it got made like, I understood mare aboot it when you were explaining it tae me. Than, like, usually I'd jist dae any'hin' I wanted (laughs) and no listen but you had tae think aboot it at the group (Josh).

Both Gary and Josh describe how the group setting supported a process of thinking that, perhaps, implies that they have let down the defences that they may hold when working with an adult professional on a one to one basis.

Anne described her view that the group created an environment where young people do not feel 'backed in to a corner' and so are able to open up to different and new ways of thinking and behaving.

These young people are so often backed in to a corner and pigeon holed as being certain people so that, again, it's giving them that safe environment to say 'well, no actually, I'm not happy being that person in school and I'm not happy being that person in the community'. In here, they're able to come here and, you know, be who they are in a safe environment and test the water and try different things (Anne).

3.2.2.2. Safe space

Closely linked to the learning environment is the sub-ordinate theme of 'safe space'. This emerged during reflection by five of the young people on the predictability and safety they experienced while attending the group.

The experience of the safe space is described by many of the young people in relation to previous experiences. Daryl described his experience at school as characterised by a sense of unpredictability and uncertainty.

In between, like some days it was alright but some days it would just go really pear shaped (Daryl).

Life in other settings is generally viewed as being unpredictable for the young people and the group provides a stable and secure space that is predictable:

I dunno I knew what I was goin' tae dae at the group, I knew what I was doin' and I knew I could dae it. At school I never knew what was gonna happen, I didnae know if I was goin' in tae school and then just get chucked out

again. I never knew if it was gonna be a bad day or a good day (Gary).

This extract demonstrates the value that Gary placed on knowing what to expect at the group and knowing that he could meet the expectations placed upon him. This can be linked to the value placed on focused work that has already been described. As a result of knowing what to expect and knowing that this would not be beyond his capabilities, the group appears to have created a safe space for Gary.

Josh placed similar value within the group on knowing that everything was going to be 'okay' and of not having the worry of potential conflict or negative outcomes:

I never had any trouble wi' them or that, so it was good, you always end up havin' trouble wi' folk at school an' when you're out, you never know what'll end up happening. At the group it was always okay so you didn't have to worry, you could get on (Josh).

3.2.2.3. Responsibility to the group

Four of the young people described that, as part of the experience of being group members, they developed a sense of responsibility to the group.

Daryl describes an acceptance that things have to be done, even if they are uncomfortable initially, to support the group work process and this implies a responsibility to the group:

At first I didn't feel comfortable with that [sharing with the group] but there's nothing not to feel comfortable. They done it as well, it's just part of how the group works, eh, it's got to be done (Daryl).

Matt describes a commitment to working through things even if they are unpleasant because of a commitment to the group and a value for the fact that other young people are doing the same things:

It was embarrassing, I dinnae like talking in front of folk. I just had tae dae it, I had to do what everyone else done, else what was the point of going. It did get easier (Matt).

Josh described a similar commitment to attending the group despite his continuing truancy from school during this period:

I only missed one day and I canne even remember, aye, I can remember why it was. I'd been pluggin' the school and I forgot aboot the group 'n; I'd been skivin' the school and Laura came to pick me up 'n; I wisnae there so I got busted (laughs). But I went every other week, if you didn't go you felt like people would miss you and it wisnae as good when there wisnae many folk so you had to really (Josh).

This sub-ordinate theme highlights the sense of responsibility of the individuals to make the group a success and an understanding that if everyone did not contribute the process would be less effective. In these excerpts the young people demonstrate a commitment to the group and to the other members. Interestingly, Josh's feeling that he would be missed has an impact on subsequent feelings of responsibility to the group and contrasts with the negative school experience reported by many of the young people. A similar experience of being cared for and wanted is implied in the following excerpt from Matt in relation to his school experiences:

But school didnae really bother aboot me, they didnae honestly care, that's why I didnae go. (Matt).

3.2.2.4. Shared experience

Within the descriptions of the experience, a number of the young people placed value on the shared histories with their fellow group members. For example, Daryl reflected that having a shared history gave him the sense of security and safety to feel 'okay' when discussing his offending:

People that have been through the same past, well, not the but the same offending spree and that, so it was good definitely. Made me feel a lot better, like it was okay to talk about it all (Daryl).

James and Matt also expressed value for the shared experience that comes from the young people having similar problems in other settings:

'cause there was people in the same position as me. With the same problems at school, and had got in to the same problems at school, eh. (James).

It was good though, hearing about folk that had done the same kind o' 'hings as me, like getting' drunk and getting' wound up and getting in tae stupid fights (Matt).

Josh described how knowing that other people had committed similar offences helped him to talk about his behaviour.

that was alright, everybody had done basically the same kinda things. But, eh, I dunno, I got on fine wi' everybody an' nobody was sayin' any'hing or startin' so I didnae feel like a weirdo, like when I spoke about the car, I had tae stand up and speak about the car, I felt quite embarrassed but no really because o' them or the staff, I knew they'd done bad stuff tae so the didn't look at me like a freak (Josh).

This suggests that the shared experience is important in creating a sense of not being judged so that the young people feel able to speak freely and discuss their offending honestly and openly.

Within this theme the young people described feeling abnormal in some way in other settings. Josh uses the terms ‘freak’ and ‘weirdo’. Dwight described feeling ‘normal’ in the group setting and James implied that being treated differently was a catalyst for inappropriate behaviour in school:

getting treated normal, instead of at school, that's where the silly behaviour starts (James).

This sense of being different is an experience the young people share when they are in other settings, around people to whom their behaviour is alien. This links with the emergence of a ‘safe space’ discussed above and the safety within the group to let go of the image or persona they have come to represent.

Anne considered the interpersonal aspects of the group to be central to its impact:

knowing that other people are in the same boat, trying, learning from each other, being able to work on their issues in a really safe environment. And I think it can, maybe, I think these things are more relevant to the young people than the fact that we done a session on alcohol. I mean, I'm sure some of them do find that interesting and useful but I would say that, erm, it's the kinda interpersonal stuff that they find more helpful (Anne).

3.2.2.5. Shared Focus

Alongside the importance of a 'shared experience' with the other group members, a further subordinate-theme emerged that captured the importance of a shared focus within the group. This sub-ordinate theme also relates and contributes to the subordinate themes 'learning environment' and 'safe space'. The sense of not being alone and not being the primary focus as the person who has done wrong and battling against an authority figure appears to have supported a positive experience and emerged from the young peoples accounts.

James described the sense of isolation he had experienced at school and an experience of equality in the group:

*(at school) I was the odd one out. Here I was just equal
(James).*

Matt described not being the focus of negative attention as in other settings:

*well, we all done it wasn't just me getting' all the grief like
it was at school (Matt).*

Josh describes a similar value on not being the 'baddie':

*It felt weird standin' up an' talkin' about it but everyone
else stood up as well, I went first so I 'hink that's why I felt
so embarrassed but it helped to get on wi' hings cause I
knew what they had done. We were all just doin' it
together really, it wisnae about one person being the
baddie (Josh).*

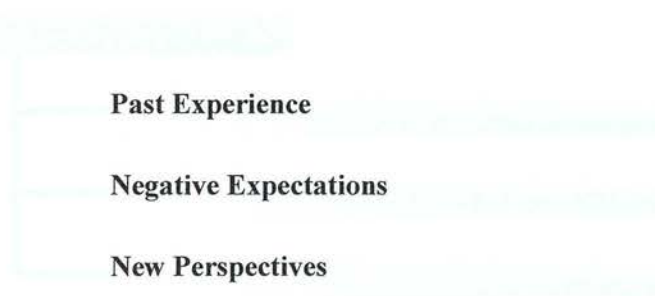
Polly shares the view, from her experience as a facilitator, that the young people will experience the group setting and the shared focus within it as less confrontational than individual input:

I suppose in the group there's less, it's less of a burden on them to be expected to about every'hing and just let it all out. It's less confrontational than the one to one (Polly).

3.2.3. Cognitive Shift

The young peoples descriptions throughout the interviews indicated that a process of cognitive change had occurred as part of their experience of attending the group. The young people reported a set of negative expectations about their performance and their relationships with others and related these to negative past experiences. However, they described a process of changing perspectives that encompassed their experiences within the group and a changing view of themselves in terms of their competencies and their capacity for the future. This cognitive shift is expressed below in terms of three sub-ordinate themes.

Cognitive Shift



3.2.3.1. Past Experiences

As has been illustrated, throughout the chapter, there was a clear trend in the young peoples narratives to reflect on and make comparisons with their previous experiences. The young people frequently reflected on the differences between their experience in the group and past experiences of failure and rejection. All of the young people who participated discussed negative past experiences.

This emerged in relation to relationships with other adults:

I never really got on wi' any o' the staff at school. And a was jist like, I never used to like, like, being in the classes (Gary)

These experiences had a clear impact on Daryl's view of himself and his ability to cope in group situations.

it's happened all the time like. That's why I got kicked out of school like. Just people around me all the time and I just couldnae handle it, like (Daryl).

Matt described how negative experiences at school led to his decision to stop attending:

when I went there I just sat there in an empty classroom on my own, so I just stopped goin' (Matt).

Five of the six participants made specific reference to negative experiences in school and this appears to have impacted on their view of themselves and expectations for the future.

3.2.3.2. Negative expectations

All of the young people interviewed expressed negative expectations that they had held at the beginning of the group about their experience of attending the group and of the outcome of their experience:

I thought it wid be rubbish, I thought I widnae like it as much as I did, but it was actually quite good, and, I liked and attended it a lot (Gary)

I thought it'd be bad when I first went, I thought, like, cause I wouldn't know anyone, I thought I wouldn't even last, I thought I would quit or that there would be trouble.

I thought something stupid would end up happening or something like that, eh, I didnae think I would last (Daryl).

This second excerpt reflects the negative expectations held by Daryl when he began his involvement with the group. His initial fear that the group would be bad or in some way unpleasant is in agreement with the other young people and driven by a concern of not knowing any of the other young people. However, Daryl goes on to explain that being in new situations created a set of negative expectations about his ability to cope. The expectation is that he would quit or become involved in some kind of conflict that would result in a negative outcome. This may reflect Daryl's underlying assumptions about his own abilities to resolve conflict and of the likelihood of negative outcomes.

The following excerpt reflects that Josh was anticipating being judged and labelled and that this governed his expectation for the group:

aye well, i didnae think it wid be fun to start wi', cos you were goin' there fur bein' bad (Josh)

3.2.3.3. New perspectives

The experience in the group appears to have provided new evidence that contradicts the beliefs that formed in response to repeated experiences of failure or criticism. All of the participants described the development of a new perspective. Daryl reported that attending the group provided evidence that he was able to cope in a group setting:

It showed me that I could handle it, handle working with people that I didn't know... Showed me that I could work in a group (Daryl).

This excerpt highlights how this young person is drawing on the experience within the group as evidence for a different view of himself as someone who is capable of working with people and being part of a group.

Anne describes her view that attending in itself is an achievement that can be utilised to enhance the young peoples' views of themselves:

expectations are low of them and so to actually come in this group and achieve something and completing something (sighs). It's about so much more than just talking about the offending behaviour or going through the motions of each session plan. It's about actually sticking something out and achieving something even if it is just coming every time for thirteen weeks (Anne).

The experience of successfully completing the group brings supports a process whereby the young people begin to create a new view of themselves as being competent and capable:

It was amazing and then I thought I could go back to school, I could do it (Josh).

Aye, it made me feel kinda good about myself, that I'd done it... I thought if I'd done that I could go back to school and dae that, well for the time I had left anyway. Go and get ma head down and try my hardest (Gary).

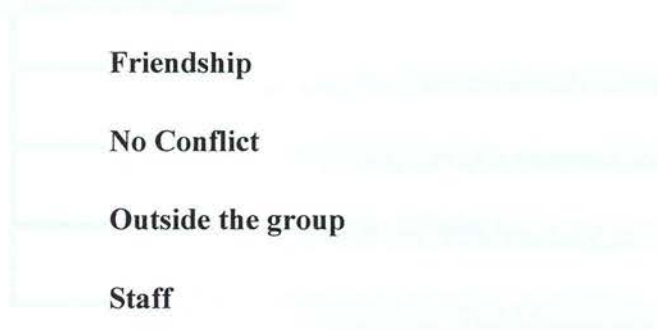
In the excerpt above, Gary described how the positive experience of completing the group has demonstrated to him that if he could succeed in one area then he could

transfer this to other areas of his life. This statement indicates that he is taking responsibility for getting back to school. He indicates a belief that he has 'done it' and can go on achieve other things and this links to the sense of personal agency that emerged and was discussed previously.

3.2.4. Relationships

Relationships emerged as an important component of the young peoples' experience within the group. This theme encompasses the relationships that the group members formed with each other and the facilitators as well their narratives about changes in their relationships with people out with the group that they related to their attendance at the group.

Relationships



3.2.4.1. Friendship

Each of the six young people spoke positively about their experience of meeting new people at the group and four of the six young people described the experience of forming friendships at the group. For Dwight this was the best part of the group:

making new friends. Making new friends was the best bit (Dwight).

James reflects in the following excerpt that he has appreciated the opportunity to make friends in a new environment and away from his community and, perhaps, a particular way of behaving in social situations that is associated with his usual peer group:

Having fun wi' people I didnae know. Makin' friends away fae the streets. I would like tae see them all again. I just wonder what they're up to now (James).

This excerpt also indicates, however, a sense of loss when the group is over and the young people are no longer brought together on a weekly basis.

3.2.4.2. No Conflict

Closely related to the positive relationships and friendships reported by the young people in shaping their experience of the group was the experience of being in a group setting where there was no conflict. The young people reported having positive experiences and getting on well with everyone. Within the context of the other themes this is particularly important as many of the young people entered the group with negative expectations and past experiences of having conflict with others in group situations. This also links to the sub-ordinate theme of 'safe space' that was presented earlier where the group is managed in a way to ensure that the setting is predictable and consistent. Gary described his experiences as being positive and the fact that there was no trouble was significant to him:

I always, aye, I got on alright wi' everybody, it was quite fun. I never had nae trouble wi' anyone. I dinnae 'hink I did anyway. I thought we all got on really well (Gary).

This was echoed in the experiences described by Josh and Daryl:

Nae hassle, nae bother at the group (Josh).

I didnae fall oot with any of them (Daryl).

The absence of conflict allows for James to feel safe and reinforces his sense of belonging:

I got on fine wi' everybody at the group and nobody was saying anithin' or startin' so I didnae feel like a weirdo (James).

Polly considers the relationships within the group support a process of change and the opportunity to break habits that have developed as defences in response to unhealthy and negative relationships with others or because of the assumptions and attitudes that the young people hold.

some of them just haven't had, well, for some of them, school's just been such a bad experience and if they've got problems in their family and at home as well, they just have no sense of acceptance, importance and confidence as well, sometimes I wonder if having attitude to people in authority is just something that is a habit to them and you know, hopefully it gives them a different view on that having had a positive experience (Polly).

3.2.4.3. Relationships out with the group

Five of the six young people who participated reported that changes occurred as a result of the group in their relationships with other people. In the following excerpt, Gary reported that his relationships at school changed and that his teachers began to praise his efforts. This may be in response to a change in Gary's behaviour and attitude, or after experiencing a positive relationship with adults within the group, perhaps Gary was able to accept, or even seek the positive reinforcement and acceptance he had experienced in the group.

Stuff changed at school, the teachers, they started tae say, aye, yer dain' gid like, and saying stuff like that (Gary).

Gary also experienced a change in his relationships at home with his mother.

Aye, a got on wi' ma mum an' that a lot better, there wis nae mare arguments or no 'hin' (Gary).

James reported a significant change in his home life and in particular in his relationship with his father.

My relationship w' my dad. Well we got over that. Because I was being better behaved my dad started getting on wi' me more.

So how did that change things?

There was nae tension in the hoose, like, I could sit in the same room as him. Before there would just be an argument 'er nothing (James).

Josh reported that his mother was able to trust him and her behaviour towards him has changed so that his experiences at home have also been affected by his experience within the group:

I sit in a lot mare noo an' ma mum lets me have pals in noo, cos she trusts me an' that, eh. Saves us goin' oot an' causin' havoc (Josh).

Josh reported, in the following excerpt, that his parents had appreciated the effort he had made and the fact that he had completed the intervention supported this.

Aye, well they really werenae very happy wi' cos o' after what had happened wi' the car, but efter the group I got on better wi' them, they thought I was tryin' I think, they were pleased that I finished the group (Josh).

However, this was not the experience of all of the young people involved and Matt's relationship with his parents continued to deteriorate.

Just the same, nothing really changed, same as before. But now I dinnae stay wi' ma mum an' I dinnae stay wi' ma dad. They both kicked me out anyway (Matt).

3.2.4.4. Staff

The young people expressed the value that they placed on their relationship with staff and the positive focus within this.

They were easy to talk to as well, they were just like normal people. They didn't act like social workers, a lot different from other social workers... they werenae always kicking you back aboot stuff you'd done, they were helping me get through stuff. They didn't go on about what I'd done wrong, they just tried to help me wi' the future (James).

In the excerpt above James describes how the focus remained positive and future oriented and reports a sense that the staff had a genuine interest in helping him. He also implies a pre-existing view of social workers, which may be based on a previous experience and influences his expectations. Matt reports a similar experience below and reflects on how this is different from other relationships. Matt described his experience within the group of testing limits that comes from a history of disrupted relationships and a fear of intimacy and being let down:

I dinnae ken, just people listenin' tae you, lettin' you explain an' no wantin' just tae shout at you and get rid o' you. It was helpin' me and school wisnae... so just being listened to, nobody was bothered about me at home or at school, well that's obvious in't it? just being listened to and always being able to go back every week, even if you'd been an arse (Matt).

The importance of feeling wanted and not being rejected for his behaviour is compounded by his experiences that he described during the interview of feeling unwanted at school and at home.

The small group and high level of staffing contributed to the development of relationships with staff as described by Gary below:

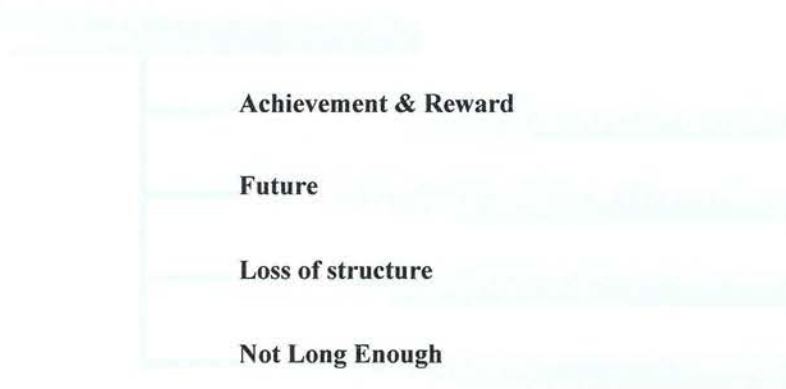
there wis mare people tae talk tae than there wid be at school. Like at school you wid hae one teacher, but there there wis like three people. So you could just talk to more people and it was easier. They were interested (Gary).

The high staff ration is considered to be positive because he experienced staff as being available for him and being interested in him.

3.2.5. Ending

The ending of the group emerged as a super-ordinate theme with the young people sharing both positive and negative aspects of this experience. Much of the emphasis around the ending centres on what it represents for the young people in terms of achievement and moving forward. However, the ending also represents a feeling loss of the structure and routine the group afforded and a sense that the group was not long enough.

Ending



3.2.5.1. Achievement & Reward

The descriptions of the ending of the group is characterised by a sense of achievement and the achievement being recognised and rewarded. The ending is marked by an outing and this was highlighted by the young people as a positive marked by a sense of achievement at having completed the programme. All of the young people described the sense of achievement at completing the group and the importance of marking this with a special outing and by receiving acknowledgment through the reports and certificates that they received.

The go-karting, that was amazing, ah, that was great like. That was well good fun. It was the whole atmosphere, we went out for a meal and it was just an amazing day. I got certificates, that was just for attending the group and doing well and that. I think I got one certain one but I can't remember what it was. I can't remember (Daryl).

Knockhill, that wis gid. Aye, that fun, we had to go to the office first and get a report, I'm nae sure, I 'hink I got a hundred per cent attendance 'n something aboot helping staff 'n stuff like that, cannae really remember. dead chuffed though (Gary).

Gary reflects that the reports received in the group are very different from reports that have been received in the past:

Cos maist o' the reports a got fae school were bad, just be, they wouldnae be good, ken (Gary).

As in previous themes the significance of the event is driven, in part, by the unique and new experience and contrasts are made with past experiences:

I got a report and I got a certificate, my Gran's got them all. Still like to look at them (laughs) (Matt).

I was lookin' at it the other day. I've got the certificate and ma report, it was aboot eighty six (% attendance) or som'hin'. There wis only one person who had full attendance. I'd got a certificate and that tae. I was chuffed wi' them. Want tae see them, I'll go and git them. (went to get them) look this one's was for being supportive and respectful to others (Josh).

The experience of being rewarded emerged within the sense of achievement as the demonstration of recognition and celebration of the achievement.

It was good. It was like do the work then that's you finished, ken something at the end o' it. I got an easter egg (James).

It was good, a fun day, a reward, pizza and go- kartin' (Josh).

The importance of providing this praise and acknowledgement is recognized by the facilitator:

Certainly there's a sense of pride on that last day when we do finish up, you know, we have an award ceremony and there's a sense of, er, a good ending to it. I think endings are quite important and I think being able to recap all the work they've done and to be able to show them is quite good and point out what we've learned about them as people as well as what they've learned from the group. To be able to give them praise for what they've done and in a constructive way tell them what they still need to work on. Mainly it's just nice to see them achieve something(Polly).

3.2.5.2. Future

There was a sense that the end of group heralded a new beginning for the young people and a desire to go and get on with their lives as is described in the excerpts below from Daryl and Josh:

Aye, it was brilliant. Then that was the end of it. Had tae think about getting a job and behavin'. Gettin' on wi' ma life, that's what it aw about (Daryl).

It helped me grow up. Tae realise that all the stuff that I've done in the past is just stupid and focus on growing up and the rest of my life. Put the rest of the stuff behind me (Josh).

The young people comment that the sense of getting on with things comes from the staff focusing on the future and may reflect the modelling of a problem solving and future oriented approach. This is described by James in the excerpt below:

Cause they werenae always kicking you back aboot stuff you'd done, they were helping me get through stuff. They didnae go on aboot what I'd done wrong, they just tried to help me wi' the future (James).

Anne reflects that she considers that, as the group comes to an end the focus shifts to a process of moving and having a 'fresh start':

I think the fact that we do, we do kinda celebrate the achievement, they get their certificates, they get their reports. The reports are visual so they can see how much has change, how big or how little that might be, what areas they still need to work on, eh, you know (pause) it's, it's not only about achievement and closure but I suppose it's about fresh starts as well (Anne).

3.2.5.3. Loss of Structure

The following excerpt reflects the sense of loss that was felt at the group ending. In particular, there was a sense that the structure, routine and activity was missed.

In the following excerpt Gary indicated that he had appreciated having something to do and something to get out of bed in the morning for:

'cause I liked goin' tae the group, ken, it was better than lyin' in ma bed. It was good to have somethin' tae dae (Gary).

Daryl concurred that the group offered an activity that meant he did not spend the day around the house.

Got me out of the house for the day (Daryl)

Similarly, James reported a void following completion of the group that he felt particularly on the day of the group.

Boring. Cause the time that I came to the group I was just sitting about the house (James).

3.2.5.4. Not Long Enough

Closely linked with the loss of structure is the young people's views that the group did not last for a long enough period. Four of the young people stated that they would have liked the group to continue for longer:

It felt weird when it come to Friday and I wisnae goin' back, I think it should have been on for longer cause I enjoyed it (Josh).

I would have enjoyed it if it kept on going, eh, but at the end of the day it had finish and there was nothing I could (Daryl).

I really didnae want it tae finish that soon, even just a bit longer would have been good for me I think, but still, that was it, eh (Greg).

There is evidence in both Daryl and Gregs' descriptions of a sense of wishing the group could continue for longer but having no say or control over the timing or length of the intervention.

Of note in the analysis of the super-ordinate theme, 'ending' were the accounts of the facilitators, considered for the purposes of triangulation. The facilitators accounts of achievement and reward and the future focus within the group concurred with the young peoples accounts of their experience of 'ending'. However, it was noted that the facilitators did not refer to the experiences that the young people had that were less positive in terms of the loss of structure or desire for the group to go on for longer.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Summary of Findings

The experiences of six young people at risk of re-offending who attended a group based intervention programme to address their anti-social behaviour was explored using semi-structured interviews. Interviews were also conducted with two group facilitators for the purpose of triangulating the data. Qualitative analysis was conducted using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Five super-ordinate themes emerged. These were Personal Development and Learning: Group Membership: Cognitive Shift: Relationships and Ending.

These are discussed below in relation to the relevant literature. Placing qualitative findings within the extant literature is recommended to provide a theoretical and clinical context (Smith, 2003).

4.1.1. Personal Learning and Development

The first theme reflected the young people's descriptions of their experience of personal development and learning. All of the young people reported changes to aspects of their behaviour. Value was placed on the focused nature of the work undertaken in the group and this was illustrated by the comparisons that the young people made between the group and previous interventions. This was linked with reflections on previous ways of thinking and behaving in relation to their offending histories. An increase in consideration of consequences was recognised by all of the

young people and many of them made moral judgements about their offences. This was interpreted as an indication of a process of moral development. This appeared appropriate because the young people indicated through their dialogue that they had previously thought only of their immediate needs rather than the implications of their behaviour for themselves or others. This emerged alongside a sense that the young people had come to have a sense of ownership over their behaviour and their capacity for personal agency.

It emerged from the interviews that the experience of learning and moving on is facilitated by focused work. This emerged as being a key component of the experience of learning and developing within the group. Activity based interventions are common within areas of social work and education for young people who have struggled to cope in mainstream settings. However, the young people placed emphasis on the structured and focused input where behaviour change was described. The young people reflected that unfocused interventions can be enjoyable but do little to help because they fail to directly address the problem. Failing to talk about the problem behaviours is unhelpful and the young people appear to have valued the opportunity to talk about the issues that have brought them in to contact with youth justice services. The young people convey that it is the focus on offending that brings about change.

Traditional approaches to offending rarely focused on the offending behaviours and focused on issues of changing social circumstances, such as employment, finances

and relationships. While participants in these interventions were positive about their involvement, follow up studies found that they had little impact on rates of recidivism and so there was a shift in the focus of offending towards those behaviours that constituted it (McGuire, 2005). The young people in this study expressed their value on the work that focused on their difficulties.

Traditional learning theory would propose that the onset and development of offending behaviour comes about as the result of selective reinforcement of negative behaviours during interactions with anti-social peers or during anti-social acts when the young person achieves a desired goal. The group provides an opportunity to redress this through the reinforcement of positive and desirable behaviours within the group setting.

The importance of coming to consider consequences is highlighted by the young people as shaping their experience of change. The description of the young people's change in behaviour that involves consideration of consequences confirms that deficits in social problem solving can be addressed. This is indicative of a development in the young people's capacity to consider alternatives and evaluate consequences and suggests that the young people have found the focus on increasing their capacity for more effective social information processing meaningful and helpful.

This increased awareness of consequence may also reflect the young people showing an increased value of themselves and their futures and ties with the cognitive shift that emerged strongly and is discussed later.

Moral development was implicated in a number of the young people's accounts as they recognised a shift in their own opinions about their behaviours. Young people who offend are often considered to have a 'developmental lag' in their capacity for moral reasoning (Gibb, 1995), and have been found to draw on lower stages of moral reasoning in their decision making (Bear & Richards, 1981). This means that young people who offend are more likely to use less sophisticated and more egocentric patterns of moral reasoning. Cramer and Kelly (2004) found that young people with a diagnosis of conduct disorder used significantly more of the developmentally immature defence of denial and minimal use of more mature mechanism of identification, compared with controls. The young people reported a change in how they viewed their behaviour, no longer finding it amusing.

Moral development links with the importance of doing focused work that highlights the seriousness of the offence and encourages a process of reflection and consideration of consequences.

The increased sense of personal agency links closely with a number of other aspects of the reported experience, including the developing view of themselves as

competent and capable. A sense of self-efficacy and control are considered necessary for change to occur (Bandura, 1991). In healthy development, adolescent capacity for autonomy grows alongside a process of developing their own aspirations, working through their sense of self and separating their own views and aspirations from those of their parents (Church, 1994). However, for the participants the group appears to support the process of developing a sense of autonomy and a positive view of self. In the absence of healthy relationships with other adults or peers, young people are known to become dependent on a negative peer group and their developmental trajectory can be predicted by this (Dodge et al, 1990). Following the group the members are able to report their sense of autonomy through the belief that they are responsible for their actions and also that they have the capacity to shape their own future. This may also reflect the development of a different set of norms and values within a new social environment and ties with the theme of group membership that is discussed later.

4.1.2. Group Membership

The second theme reflected the young people's value of the 'group membership' characterised by the 'learning environment' and 'safe space' that the group affords and that is created by the young people describing a 'responsibility to the group'. The young people felt the benefit of the 'shared experience' with other young people who had significant offending histories and experience of failure in other

settings. The 'shared focus' also reduced the pressure but allowed for the young people to learn by discussing other people's behaviours and having their input. The young people reported a responsibility to themselves and to the group.

Yalom (2005) identifies 'universality' as one of the primary factors in mediating successful group based interventions. This factor encompasses the individuals heightened sense, because of their isolation, of being unique in their every-day environment. Individuals with interpersonal difficulties struggle to learn from other's experiences or feelings and are unable to share their experiences or feelings with others. As a result, they never have a sense of being accepted or validated. The sense of uniqueness comes from feeling different and estranged from the people in their environment. The young people report experiences of being isolated and of feeling different to other young people. The group disconfirms their 'uniqueness' and this can be a relief for the group members and allows them to feel 'in touch' with the world (Yalom, 2005). This is captured in the current study by the value placed on the 'shared focus' and 'shared experience' of the group members and creates a sense of belonging that is captured by the sense of 'responsibility to the group'.

Yalom (2005) proposes that, in many ways group comes to parallel the dynamics of a family, and allows for '*the corrective recapitulation of the primary family group*' (p.25) where mistakes and conflict are discussed and dealt with constructively. Members experience the positive effects of adhering to the group structure and

boundaries promote a secure environment and minimise the chaos that the members see in other parts of their life (Dies, 2000). This is demonstrated by the value the young people place on feeling equal and viewing the group as safe and predictable. The group and the leadership allows the development of the group and the creation of a structured and secure environment that contrasts from the chaos and violence in the other areas of their lives. This environment is considered to be key to the development of a successful group in which members can begin to deal with negative emotions such as fear and frustration and to begin to trust others and to value themselves (Dies, 2000).

As the facilitator Anne identifies the young people involved in the group have been 'pigeon holed' and that the negative environments they often find themselves in perpetuate their anti-social or challenging characteristics. Furthermore, the experience of being judged in a particular way by others may increase their feelings of isolation and, in turn, their allegiance to an anti-social peer group and its values and norms.

The concept of social capital can be applied to the experiences reported by the participants in terms of the group creating an environment that supports change.

'Social capital can be defined as the bulk of social interactions, networks and network opportunities that either people or communities have within a specific environment. This environment is characterised by a commonality of mutual trust and reciprocity and informed by specific norms and values' (Boeck et al., 2006, p. 19).

Social networks are considered to be important for, not only providing emotional support, but also in giving young people more opportunities, choice and power. Young people can be part of a number of different networks and there is considerable variability in the quantity and quality of these networks. Boeck et al (2006) carried out a study including 131 young offenders involved with the young offenders team in the Midlands as well as 458 young people in schools and youth groups in that area. The findings highlighted two groups of young people, those in tightly bonded networks based on their immediate surroundings differed from those with more diverse networks. The tight networks were described as small, static and providing limited opportunities in terms of engagement in a range of activities. The second group had much more extended networks allowing them to engage in a range of activities and opportunities to connect with networks out with their immediate area. The study also found that young offenders' lives were more restricted and less optimistic and shared a feeling that their own actions would have little impact on their life course. These young people are described by the authors as being in a state of 'risk aversion', whereby they are unwilling to move on from their present situation, characterised by strong bonds to a limited group with little optimism, choice or sense of personal agency. This is in direct contrast to the bulk of young people at this stage, who are beginning to develop and increase their social networks, to move on and leave problematic situations.

As we know, young people who offend and engage in anti-social behaviours are highly likely to associate with an anti-social peer group and to have experienced

rejection by peers in other settings at an earlier stage in their development. According to the Social Capital model of offending behaviour, in order to ensure the continued acceptance of a peer group a young person must adhere to the norms and values of that group. Young people at risk of re-offending are known to have a much more limited range of social opportunities and, as a result, have much more 'social capital' invested in their anti-social peer group. The experience, within the group, of being accepted and equal in another setting may play a role in developing new relationships based on trust, reciprocity and shared aims and values by providing new opportunities to develop social capital.

The Social Development Model proposes that four factors of a group determine whether an individual will become attached and committed to that group, their values, norms and behaviours. These factors are: opportunities for involvement in activities or interactions with others; the degree of this involvement or interaction; whether the young person has the skills to participate and the reinforcement the young person receives from their involvement. Once a social bond has developed the individual is influenced by this, so that if the group is pro-social then this inhibits deviant behaviour and group members will behave in a pro-social manner. In the same way, bonding to anti-social groups will increase the likelihood of anti-social behaviours (Hernekohl, Hawkins, Chung, Hill and Battin-Pearson, 2001). The model hypothesises that there are opportunities for the group to exert influence as an individual learns to change, develop and progress during a process of change.

The creation of the pro-social group membership offered by the intervention appears to have influenced the young people's attitudes and behaviours.

Similarly, Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1969) posits that bonding to individuals and society sets constraints on people and prevents them from engaging in anti social behaviour because individuals are committed to a set of shared values and concerns about other people. Within this theory, the harsh discipline and lack of supervision known to predict antisocial behaviour is seen as evidence for disrupted attachment patterns that lead to a failure to identify with parental and societal values regarding conformity. For a child where this attachment has not resulted in a shared empathy and understanding with the primary caregiver, the child does not develop shared values or internal control (Patterson, DeBarshe and Ramsey, 1989).

The findings suggest that, for young people where opportunities for social development have been restricted, an environment can be created in a group setting to facilitate development and allow the individual to bond to a pro-social group and to commit to their values, norms and behaviours.

4.1.3. Cognitive Shift

The third theme concerned a pattern of cognitive change. The young people described having had negative experiences characterised by conflict and failure. The young people reported that they began the group with expectations based on

past experiences or based on their negative views of themselves but described how these views had shifted.

Beck's (1979) cognitive model proposes that negative automatic thoughts impact on information processing and that these are derived from enduring cognitive schemas that develop in response to early experiences in childhood (Reinecke & Clark, 2004). These cognitive schemas form the basis of the cognitive triad, whereby the person has expectations about the self, current experiences and of the future (Hawton et al., 1989). In their descriptions, the young people in the present study identify that their expectations of the group, their own capacity and potential and their view of the future are governed by their beliefs and that these beliefs are driven by evidence from negative past experiences.

Based on the cognitive model, Clark and Steer (1995) propose four intrinsic assumptions. The first is that individuals actively construct their reality and that this is governed by an information processing system that filters and interprets cues and may, subsequently lead to maladaptive responses because the cues are inaccurately interpreted. For example, the young people's dialogue indicates that they have come to anticipate failure and rejection. The second assumption is that cognition mediates affect and behaviour so that negative automatic thoughts and assumptions maintain behavioural, motivational and behavioural symptoms. The third assumption is that cognition is knowable and accessible and a central premise to Beck's cognitive model is that individuals can learn to access the thoughts that maintain their

difficulties and identify errors in information processing. This is the primary educational aim of the current intervention. Finally, the authors propose that cognitive change is central to the human change process so that behavioural and emotional change can only occur if the cognitive processes and structures change.

Ultimately the young person reports having gone in to the group with the expectation of further failure. The reality for many young people at risk of re-offending around repeated failure in family and social relationships as well as in academic and social work interventions means that these 'core beliefs' are being reinforced and maintained and these core beliefs influence how they process any information in new situations. Social knowledge structures are considered to underpin social information processing patterns (Dodge & Petit, 2003). The modification of core beliefs or schemata can be viewed, therefore, as essential in adapting and developing skills in social information processing (Lochman et al., 2004). Schemata influences information processing at a number of levels and begins with the child selectively attending to cues that match their expectations. For example, if they experienced harsh and unpredictable relationships in their early lives they may anticipate that adults will be critical and rejecting and will attend to social cues that match this expectation. Schemata can also influence the young person's ability to consider consequences from alternative problem solutions and this governs the way the young person will ultimately respond (Lochman et al., 2004).

The young people have directly identified a shift in their beliefs about themselves and their capacity to achieve and perform in a group and to transfer this to other areas of their lives. This represents a significant cognitive shift as a result of the behavioural and cognitive elements of the programme. The comments made by some of the young people about their abilities suggest that their self-concept has been influenced by their experience within the group.

4.1.4. Relationships

The fourth theme reflects the relationships that developed within the group. This encompassed the friendships that developed and the positive focus that developed between the young people and facilitators. The interactions and relationships that developed within the group were characterised for the young people by the lack of conflict they experienced. This has also been reflected in their experience of having a 'safe space' whereby they experienced the group as being consistent and predictable. The young people also described how their relationships out with the group developed as a consequence of their attendance.

McIvor (1992) identified a number of elements in the relationship between offenders and their supervisors that centred around consistency, fairness and mutual respect. A key concept in this study is the role of the supervisor, in this case the facilitator being viewed as 'firm but fair' in his/her use of authority, so that the offender is clear about what is expected and this is enforced consistently and rigorously thus increasing compliance. In contrast, inconsistencies in the

enforcement of rules can lead to a lack of commitment and compliance and a sense of resentment. This fits with the sub-ordinate theme discussed already of the young people identifying the group as a safe space, a place where things are predictable and where they value knowing what to expect. This represents a shift from previous negative experiences of harsh and inconsistent parenting that are reinforced by inconsistent discipline in other settings and a sense of not being wanted or not fitting in that the young people describe. As an experience this may play a role in the cognitive shift that occurs in demonstrating an alternative to the young people's automatic negative expectations triggered by new experiences.

Trotter's (1999) 'pro-social' modelling theory focuses on the supervisory relationship rather than on a given intervention and highlights a number of central principles within young people and professionals, including role clarification, pro-social modelling and clarification, problem-solving and positive relationships. McNeill (2002) goes on to suggest that changes in behaviour may be accounted for by the young person's feelings of loyalty and accountability towards their supervisors and suggests that it may be skills and qualities held by those professions and professionals working with offenders, rather than a specific approach. In accordance with this theory, it may not be the interactions with peers but rather staff that are most significant in effecting change, or that a positive relationship with staff can be more powerful than negative peer relationships.

Anti-social young people evoke negative reactions in teachers and parents (Rutter et al., 1998) and this creates negative responses in the young people and maintains their feelings of being rejected and unwanted. The sense of being let down and not having dependable figures at home or at school is evident in Matt's dialogue in particular. He describes testing limits and this is driven, in young people with disrupted attachments, by a fear of intimacy and the expectation of being let down (Howe, 2005). The experience that the facilitators remain open and available to him and that his place in the group is safe despite the limit testing is valued and allows the development of interpersonal trust (Dies, 2000). This theme encompasses the importance of 'always being able to go back' as Matt describes appreciating being able to make mistakes or have a bad day but that his place as part of the group remains secure. This links with the theme of having a 'safe space' for adolescents who are striving to achieve autonomy while seeking direction and approval. The environments has to allow for the adolescent to express some 'badness' that the adult can tolerate and accept so that the group facilitator must acknowledge the adolescent's need for autonomy without rejecting the adolescent (Church, 1994).

The theme 'relationships' is interlinked with the aspects of the super-ordinate theme around the group and the importance of social capital and being invested in a new group and committing to new values and norms.

4.1.5. Ending

The fifth theme concerned the ending of the group and the achievement that this represented for the young people. The sense of loss also emerged in relation to the structure that the group had imposed. The focus on the future emerged strongly within this super-ordinate theme and the experience of achievements being recognised and rewarded emerged throughout the young peoples' narratives.

The ending of the group appears to represent an experience of celebration of achievement and a new beginning in the young people who feel equipped and competent, as has emerged in previous themes, to taking their gains forward. This theme appears to be related and emerges during the young people's dialogue alongside their changing perspective and view of themselves so that the focus on achievement and new evidence is link with the experience of a cognitive shift explored above.

The young people also describe a feeling of loss and a desire for the group to go on for longer. Acknowledgement of these aspects of the ending of the group were absent from the facilitators accounts and could indicate a positive bias in their descriptions of the intervention or a lack of awareness as to this aspect of the experience for the participants.

4.2. Implications of Findings

The aim of the current study was to begin to develop an understanding of the experience of this group of young people in relation to their involvement in this group based intervention and not to evaluate the programme or generalise about all interventions of this type. However, the findings have utility and a level of transferability in informing service providers, who work with young offenders about what aspects of interventions can be meaningful and useful for vulnerable young people at risk of re-offending.

4.2.1. Focused work

The importance of undertaking focused work emerged as a key element of the process of learning and developing. For young people who have chaotic lives where there are few constraints and limited boundaries, the experience of a structured group setting is containing and allows the young person to see themselves as competent and capable and to celebrate the success of completing a piece of work. The importance of this sense of achievement is highlighted by all of the young people and underpins a shift in their views of themselves and of their futures.

There are also ethical considerations when a young person is obliged to work with an agency but is unclear as to the aims or goals of the piece of work as well as limiting the potential for a collaborative therapeutic relationship with the professional who is undertaking the piece of work.

4.2.2. Group Interventions

Group work interventions for young people at risk of re-offending carry short term and long term risks. The short term risks relate to bringing together a group of moderate to high risk young people who can be volatile and impulsive in their behaviours and reactions to others. The longer term risks relate to the influence that anti-social young people can exert over one another and the potential for anti-social attitudes and behaviours to be exacerbated by the amalgamation.

However, in contrast to the assertion that peer group amalgamation in young people at risk of re-offending may support and increase deviancy (Dishion et al., 1999; Granic & Dishion, 2003; Gifford-Smith et al., 2005), the young people report positive experiences of being in the group, in terms of behaviour change, positive relationships, the creation of a safe space and a sense of equality where they did not fall in to patterns of disruptive and anti-social behaviour.

The level of planning before the group and supervision and reinforcement of positive behaviour within the group is likely to have played a role in this. The group, while challenging, can also be viewed as a valuable and powerful opportunity for facilitators to neutralise the negative impact of peer attitudes and behaviours by encouraging young people at risk of offending to actively challenge the anti-social beliefs and attitudes of other group members. The facilitators, in this environment, can then support a process of supporting alternative viewpoints, values and lifestyles with the individuals involved (McIvor, 2002).

4.2.3. Follow up Provision

While the majority of young people reported an experience of a change in relationships with other people in their lives after attending the group, this was not the case for all young people. Of note, Matt, reported that the group, while a positive experience at an individual level, could not change his entrenched negative relationships with his family. Matt reflected on the experience of being accepted, even when he had pushed boundaries within the intervention. However, this appears to have further reinforced his views of having been let down by his family and the education system. This highlighted a possible area of the intervention that should be considered when young people complete the programme so that appropriate follow up support, on an individual or family basis, can be put in place.

Furthermore, in line with recommendations (Buist, 2003) follow up provisions should be made where necessary before the end of the group for young people who have ongoing difficulties. Most of the young people reported missing the group and the structure it provided and described a desire for the group to continue. Follow up provision of a practical or vocational nature would utilise this motivation and allow for continued development. Time within the group could be devoted to planning for activities to fill the time that the group leaves in the lives of the young people involved. It was noted that the facilitators accounts did not reflect on these aspects of the intervention. Staff training and increased awareness of these aspects of group ending would be beneficial to ensure that the full scope of the young peoples experience is recognised.

4.3. Personal Reflections

As described in Chapter 2, a reflective diary was kept by the researcher throughout the period of this research to increase awareness and transparency about the researcher's own influence over the research process. The reflective process can be considered particularly pertinent where the researcher has been involved with the experience under investigation. The sense of stepping back and reflecting on the researchers own contribution and experiences as a therapist and a researcher mediates the impact of having conflicting roles (Asselin, 2003).

I used the diary to record personal reflections of my own thoughts and reactions to the process of interviewing the participants and this enabled me to remain focused on the data while providing the opportunity to reflect on my own influences by highlighting my personal reactions to and opinions on what was emerging.

Two particular themes emerged that captured aspects of the processes that I was most aware of. These related to my 'dual role' as a researcher and clinician and my own reactions or 'frustrations' to aspects of the young peoples' experiences.

4.3.1. Dual Role

I reflected during the process of interviewing the young people on the conflict created by having a dual role as a clinician and researcher for the purpose of this piece of work.

I was aware of the potential for bias as there was professional satisfaction when the young people reported positive experiences and subsequent gains. I was concerned that this may impact on my interviewing and the process of analysis.

A further aspect of this conflict was evident in my thoughts on the interview process. I was aware that the young people frequently sought further reinforcement for maintaining gains and making further gains since our last contact. As a professional who had provided clinical input I was keen to reinforce this. However, I was conscious of the potential for this to overshadow the focus of the interview.

He had so much to tell me about things that have happened since the group. He's working and making plans for the future and was very keen for me to hear about it. (21/07/07)

4.3.2. Frustration

During the reflective process I often recorded my own reactions to the young peoples' descriptions of their experience of previous interventions or experiences within the school setting. These experiences were often negative and had reinforced the young peoples' negative views of themselves and of others. The vicious circle

that is created when young people are problematic in other settings was evident through their reports of feeling rejected, let down and lacking in the skills to succeed in group settings. I also understood that their behaviour was unacceptable in other settings and negatively impacted upon other peoples' experiences. The diary entries allowed me to reflect on this and to consider my own desire to emphasise the success of the group as a means of breaking this cycle.

There seems to be a trend emerging through the interviews where the young people talk about how difficult school was and why they didn't achieve more in that setting. I know their experiences resulted from their behaviour but I wonder how much it was understood. (18/09/07).

4.4. Methodological Appraisal

When presenting research findings it is necessary to consider them within the context of the setting under which the results were derived and the methodology used. This is considered in the following section.

4.4.1. Meeting the Aims of the Study

The current study aimed to explore the experiences of six young people at risk of re-offending who had attended a group based intervention, to identify what factors impacted on their experience and to explore what impact attendance at the group had on their lives during and after their attendance at the group.

The study provided the young people with the opportunity to explore their experiences of this intervention and to enlighten service providers about what aspects of the intervention was meaningful and helpful as well as considering what aspects might have been difficult or unhelpful. This enabled the researcher to deduce the aspects of the intervention that impacted on the young people's experience and evolved into the themes that emerged from the study. Despite a number of methodological issues which are discussed in the next sections, the current study was able to give a voice to this group, a relatively untapped source of rich and powerful information, and to allow professionals and service providers to gain valuable insight into their unique experience. The participants in this study were given the opportunity to share their experiences of the intervention under investigation within the context of their lives and their previous experiences that

would not have been possible using a quantitative methodological approach. However, a number of methodological limitations limit the conclusions that can be drawn from the current study.

The study attempted to explore the impact of the group on the young people's lives during and after the intervention. This is more difficult to evaluate. The young people's reports were rich and included reference to experiences in many other areas of their lives including home, education and employment as well as relationships with peers and adults in all of those settings. The young people reported that the experiences resulted in personal development and learning and a shift in how they perceived themselves and others. However, further, more specific and long term follow up that addressed the methodological limitations of this study would be necessary in order to form firm conclusions as to the impact that attendance at the group had on the young people's lives.

A secondary aim of the study was to inform future areas of research and service development. The young people's descriptions of their experience have clinical value in informing service providers about what aspects of group based interventions are viewed as meaningful, helpful and valuable in bringing about change and the clinical implications of this have been discussed.

In view of the methodological limitations of the study, a number of suggestions have been made for areas of further research and adding to our knowledge base in this area.

4.4.2. Methodological Limitations

Qualitative research methodology can be criticised for failing to offer generalisability. In the current study IPA has been used to gain a rich understanding of a small group of individuals who have had a shared experience. The small sample size is recognised in the current study but is necessary because of the detailed and ideographic approach to analysis and the quantity of data produced by each interview. However, the findings have utility in understanding a phenomenon, particularly in an area where little or no research has been undertaken, such as the phenomenon under investigation here (Smith & Dunsworth, 2003). Furthermore, the results can be interpreted and understood within a broader theoretical and clinical context (Smith, 2003).

The study used a small number of participants and the quality and quantity of the interviews varied. The length of interviews varied from 12 to 50 minutes. As a group, teenage males may not be as vocal as other populations and they varied in their ease during the interview process. The young people, well known to the researcher because of the dual role as group facilitator, were also keen to engage with the researcher and, at times, digressed from the interview topic. This could

have been managed in future by having a review prior to meeting to conduct the interview.

The interview was carried out between eight and twelve months after the young people had attended the group to allow for the young people to continue in their lives and for the interviews to explore the experience of the group and its impact. However, a limitation of the current study is that, because of time constraints, no longer term follow up of the impact of the experience has been possible.

Six of eight of the young people who attended the groups over the time period were invited to participate and did so. The remaining two were not invited because they had left the area and their whereabouts was unknown. Therefore, selection bias was avoided as much as possible for the current project. However, it is of note that young people are identified by the social worker as being appropriate for the group and referred accordingly. Following this a process of selection for the group takes place and biases may occur at the referral stage.

4.4.3. Investigator Bias

Researcher involvement in a study has been associated with a larger effect size in interventions aimed at reducing re-offending (Lipsey, 1995). While this finding pertains to quantitative research, it is equally relevant to qualitative methodological approaches. One explanation for this is that the researcher influences the study and produces a bias in the findings. However, Lipsey (1995) suggests that the

relationship may be explained by the involvement of the researcher in terms of ensuring and monitoring the programme integrity and the quality of the intervention. This explanation is supported by larger effect sizes in smaller studies, where there can be a higher level of monitoring to ensure programme integrity is maintained.

Within IPA, the role of the investigator in interpreting the data is made explicit and it is recognised that the interpretations depend on what the investigator considers to be relevant and their attempts to make sense of what the participants share (Smith & Dunsworth, 2003). This was reflected on through the diary described and through supervision by the researcher.

4.4.4. Acquiescence

It should be acknowledged that the investigator was also a facilitator in the intervention under investigation and was well known to the young people. It is the view of the investigator that there were considerable benefits in being familiar to the young people in supporting them to participate and to provide open and rich dialogue. This may have been compromised had they been interviewed by someone who they were not familiar with. However, the potential for this to have impacted on the young peoples' reports of their experience must be acknowledged as a power imbalance existed. This may have prevented them from sharing negative aspects of their experience. It is also of note that the facilitator had positive professional relationships with the young people during their participation in the group and that

this was part of the experience that emerged from the study. The young people, therefore, appeared to be pleased to be contacted and visited by the investigator and this created a positive atmosphere for the interview, which may have increased the likelihood of them focusing on positive aspects of their experience.

4.4.5. Future Research

As discussed in the previous section a particular methodological limitation in the current study was the increased potential for acquiescence as a result of the researchers dual role and pre-existing professional relationship with the participants. To minimise the risk of acquiescence it would be useful to carry out further research with this client group using alternative interview procedures. This could include the use of a focus group setting that would allow young people to share their views and ask other young people about their experiences and this could reduce the influence of the researcher in the process. An alternative approach that may be valuable in reducing the opportunity for acquiescence would be for the interview to be conducted by a co-researcher who was unfamiliar to the young people and who had not been involved in the intervention under investigation.

It is acknowledged that the young peoples descriptions of their experience of the intervention were, generally, very positive. These accounts are rich and are considered to reflect the positive experiences that the young people had during or after the intervention as a result of their participation. Within the literature on designing and conducting qualitative research there is guidance that precludes

posing specific and direct questions to participants, particularly where a power imbalance exist associated with the age of participants or professional status of the interviewer as this can increase the potential for acquiescence (Bircher, 1999). However, it may have been helpful under the circumstances of the current study to ask the young people more specific and direct questions about what aspects of the group were unhelpful and difficult and for the researcher to express a desire to hear their views on this for the purpose of improving the service. In future research this may support more open dialogue about negative aspects of the intervention and ensure that young people feel able to share the negative as well as positive aspects of their experience.

A further technique that could have enhanced the current study and may be beneficial in future research would be to involve the participants in the research following the initial interviews by asking for their views on the honesty and consistency of the emerging findings. This process has been recommended to enhance the truthfulness and consistency of qualitative research (Slevin et. al, 1999). This could be achieved by meeting with the young people on a subsequent occasion and would allow for further exploration and the identification of any gaps in the emerging themes. Furthermore, meeting with the young people on more than one occasion to gather information may also serve to reduce the impact described in the last section whereby the young people appeared pleased to have contact with the researcher again after a gap in contact between finishing the group and meeting

again for the interview. By meeting with the young people on more than one occasion the impact of this may have been reduced.

During the interviews the young people frequently reflected on, or made comparisons with, relationships and interventions in other aspects of their lives or with other professionals. This included reflections on their experiences at school and their involvement with other agencies focused on offending. Further exploration of these issues and experiences was beyond the scope of the current study. However, the young people are best placed to inform service providers and policy makers about their experiences of these services. Furthermore, it is hoped, that the current study has illustrated that this group of young people are capable and motivated to share their experiences and should be encouraged to do so for future research to improve interventions and support better educational experiences and provision.

Further research that examined the long term outcomes for young people at risk of re-offending and that combined quantitative measures of rates of recidivism and future educational and occupational attainment would compliment the qualitative findings of this and future studies and add to our understanding of the impact of the experience of such an intervention.

The young people's accounts indicated that the relationships they formed with each other and with the staff were a significant part of their experience. Given that all of

the participant's were male and all of the group facilitators were female, further research that seeks to explore the impact of these gender differences on the experience of an intervention, within the context of the past experiences, which the young people demonstrated a capacity to explore, compare and reflect upon, would be an interesting and valuable area for further research. The impact of gender differences has been under-researched and there are no qualitative studies that address the impact this has on individual's experience of an intervention. Woodall (2007) conducted a qualitative study involving 12 young offenders aged between 18 and 21 years who were detained in a young offender institution and found that the masculine ethos was a barrier to mental health provision. This suggests that gender issues warrants further exploration in when considering the experience of interventions and the relationships that develops within those settings.

4.5. Conclusions

This study aimed to explore the unique experience of a group of young people considered to be at risk of re-offending who attended a group intervention. It is not surprising given the complex nature of serious and persistent offending in young people that the themes that emerged that underlie their experience of a group indicate a complex interaction between social, developmental, cognitive and inter-personal processes. These processes and the experience at an individual level can be missed by researchers who seek to define a programme as effective on the basis of quantifiable evidence.

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6. APPENDICES

6.1 Overview of Changing Directions Group

6.2 Participant Information Sheet

6.3 Parent information Sheet

6.4 Participant Consent Form

6.5 Parent Consent Form

6.6. Interview Schedule

6.7 Letter confirming Ethical Approval

6.8 Sample of Initial Coding

6.9 Summary of Themes / Sources and References (NVivo 7)

OVERVIEW OF CHANGING DIRECTION GROUP

WEEK

1	Session 1- Introduction & Icebreaker Games Break
2	Session 2- Introduction to Group Content Session 1- Thinking Errors Break
3	Session 2- Offence Analysis (Our Offences & Storyboard) Session 1- Peer Support Session Break
4	Session 2- Easily Aggravated / Aggravates others Session 1- Easily Aggravated / Aggravates others Break
5	Session 2- Easily Aggravated / Aggravates others Session 1- Peer Support Meeting Break
6	Session 2- Stealing Session 1- Stealing Break
7	Session 2- Peer Support Meeting Session 1- Drugs / Alcohol Break
8	Session 2- Drugs / Alcohol Session 1- Peer Support Meeting Break
9	Session 2- Misleads others / Easily Misled Session 1- Peer Support Meeting Break
10	Session 2- Authority Problems / Fronting Session 1- Peer Support Meeting Break
11	Session 2- Poor Self-Image / Inconsiderate of Self Session 1- Poor Self-Image / Inconsiderate of Self Break
12	Session 2- Peer Support Meeting Session 1- Inconsiderate of Others (Victim Awareness) Break
13	Session 2- Inconsiderate of Others (Victim Awareness) ENDING Awards / Certificates / Reports Outing

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

The University of Edinburgh



The experience of participants' who attend a group work programme for young people at risk of re-offending: a qualitative study

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project. Before you agree to take part in the study it is important for you to understand the why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read over this information and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything you are not clear about or if you would like further information. There is no hurry for you to decide.

What is the study about?

I am currently carrying out some research to look at the impact that attending the Changing Directions Group has had on young people at risk of re-offending. We are particularly interested in hearing the young person's point of view. This study is being carried out by the primary researcher in part fulfilment of a doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Edinburgh.

I plan to do this by interviewing young people who have attended the most recently run groups.

Why have I been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part because you have recently attended one of these groups.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not you take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you do decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any

time and without giving a reason. If you do decide to withdraw, this will not affect the standard of care that you may receive in the future from this service.

What will I be asked to do?

Once I know that you are willing to take part, I will arrange to meet you, either in your home or the Clinical Psychology Department at _____, whichever you prefer. If the latter, I will arrange transport to and from _____. The meeting should last about one hour in total to include a 30-minute interview and breaks if you wish. During the interview I will ask you about your attendance at the Changing Directions group.

During our meeting I will ask you how you felt about the Changing Directions Group. With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped so that I don't forget anything that is said. I expect the interview to last about 30 minutes, but you can take a break at any time if you feel you need to.

Are there any risks or benefits to taking part?

Although you will have completed your attendance at the group we hope that this study will benefit you by providing you with an opportunity to have your views heard. Your opinion may help us to develop the service that young people like you receive in the future.

You do not have to share any information you do not wish to so there should be no risk associated with taking part. However, you may stop the interview at any time if you begin to feel distressed. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. I will give the transcript of your interview a code number so that you cannot be identified. The only person to have access to the information during the study will be myself and my research supervisors.

However, should you disclose that you have been involved in criminal activity, I am obliged to act on this in the same way I would were it to come to light during the course of my clinical duties.

All the information will be stored on a secure location (a locked filing cabinet).

Once the transcripts have been completed and checked for accuracy, the tapes will be destroyed

What will happen to the results of the research study?

In order that other professionals can learn from the findings of this study, some articles and papers may be published. However, your name will not be used and you will not be able to be identified in any publication from this study. I may wish to use direct quotes in such publications but these will be anonymous and it will not be possible to identify an individual from them.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being carried out as part of the academic requirements for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, University of Edinburgh and East of Scotland NHS Clinical Psychology Training Course. It is being hosted by NHS Fife, Fife Primary Care Trust.

Who has reviewed this study?

Before any research goes ahead, it has to be checked by an Ethics Committee. They make sure that the research is OK to do. Your project has been checked by the Fife, Forth Valley and Tayside Ethics Committee.

Contact Information

If you require any further information or have any questions please contact me:

Debbie Wileman
Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Department of Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology

If you wish to seek further advice from an alternative source, the names and contact information for my clinical and academic supervisors are detailed below.

Nicola Hornsby
Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Emily Newman
Academic Supervisor
School of Health in Social Sciences
The University of Edinburgh
Medical School
Edinburgh
EH8 9AG
0131 651 3972

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

Version 3 15/05/07

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

The University of Edinburgh



The experience of participants' who attend a group work programme for young people at risk of re-offending: a qualitative study

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET- Parent / Guardian

I would like to invite your son to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not you are happy for them to take part in the study it is important for you to understand the why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read over this information and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything you are not clear about or if you would like further information. There is no hurry for you to decide.

What is the study about?

I am currently carrying out some research to look at the impact that attending the Changing Directions Group has had on young people at risk of re-offending. We are particularly interested in hearing the young person's point of view. This study is being carried out by the primary researcher in part fulfilment of a doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Edinburgh.

I plan to do this by interviewing young people who have attended the most recently run groups.

Why has my son been asked to take part?

Your son has been asked to take part because he have recently attended one of these groups.

Does he have to take part?

It is up to you and your son to decide whether or not he takes part. If you do decide that he will take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you initially agree to take part you are still free to withdraw your consent at any time and without giving a reason.

If you do decide to withdraw your son, this will not affect the standard of care that he may receive in the future from this service.

What will he be asked to do?

Once I know that your son is willing to take part, I will arrange to meet him, either in your home or the Clinical Psychology Department at _____, whichever he prefers. If the latter, I will arrange transport to and from _____. The meeting should last about one hour in total to include a 30-minute interview and breaks if he wishes. During the interview I will ask your son about his attendance at the Changing Directions group.

During our meeting I will ask your son about his time at the Changing Directions Group. With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped so that I don't forget anything that is said. I expect the interview to last about 30 minutes, but your son can take a break at any time if he feels he need to.

Are there any risks or benefits to taking part?

Although your son will have completed his attendance at the group we hope that this study will benefit him by providing him with an opportunity to have his views heard. His opinion may help us to develop the service that young people like him receive in the future.

He does not have to share any information that he does not wish to so there should be no risk associated with taking part. However, he will be free to stop the interview at any time if he begins to feel distressed. Your son will also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Will taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information that is collected about your son during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. I will give the transcript of your son's interview a code number so that he cannot be identified. The only person to have access to the information during the study will be myself and my research supervisors.

However, should your son disclose that he has been involved in criminal activity, I am obliged to act on this in the same way I would were it to come to light during the course of my clinical duties.

All the information will be stored on a secure location (a locked filing cabinet) and at the end of the study the audio tapes will be destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

In order that other professionals can learn from the findings of this study, some articles and papers may be published. However, your son's name will not be used and he will not be able to be identified in any publication from this study.

I may wish to use direct quotes in such publications but these will be anonymous and it will not be possible to identify any individual from them.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being carried out as part of the academic requirements for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, University of Edinburgh and East of Scotland NHS Clinical Psychology Training Course. It is being hosted by NHS Fife, Fife Primary Care Trust.

Who has reviewed this study?

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Contact Information

If you require any further information or have any questions please contact me:

Debbie Wileman
Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Department of Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology

If you wish to seek further advice from an alternative source, the names and contact information for my clinical and academic supervisors are detailed below.

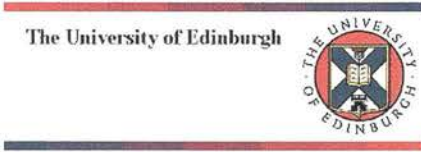
Nicola Hornsby
Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Emily Newman
Academic Supervisor
School of Health in Social Sciences
The University of Edinburgh
Medical School
Edinburgh
EH8 9AG
0131 651 3972

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet

Version 3 15/05/07

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE



Consent Form

The experience of participants' who attend a group work programme for young people at risk of re-offending: a qualitative study.

Researcher: Debbie Wileman

I have read and understood the information sheet dated _____ ☐

for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had any questions answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without this affecting any future input from the service or my legal rights. ☐

I agree to my GP bring informed of his participation. ☐

I agree to take part in the study. ☐

I agree to the interview being audio-taped. ☐

Name Date Signature

Name Date Signature

Version 2 24/04/07

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

The University of Edinburgh



Consent form for Parents / Guardians

The experience of participants' who attend a group work programme for young people at risk of re-offending: a qualitative study.

Researcher: Debbie Wileman

I have read and understood the information sheet dated _____ ☐
for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider
the information, ask questions and have had any questions
answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my son's participation is voluntary and he is ☐
free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without
this affecting any future input from the service or our legal rights.

I agree to my son's GP being informed of his participation. ☐

I agree to my son taking part in the study. ☐

I agree to the interview being audio-taped. ☐

Name

Date

Signature

Name
Version 2

Date

Signature

24/04/07

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

The University of Edinburgh



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Young People

Why were you referred to the Changing Directions Group?

Tell me about attending the Group?

What do you think is helpful for young people who attend the group?

Is there anything about attending the group that might be difficult?

Did anything change after you attended the group?

Facilitators

Tell me about the Changing Directions Group?

What do you think young people get out of attending the group?

What do you think the young people find difficult about attending the group?

How does the group differ from other types of work with young people at risk of re-offending?

Fife, Forth Valley & Tayside Research Ethics Service

Fife & Forth Valley Research Ethics Committee
Research Ethics Office
Level 9
Ninewells Hospital & Medical School
DUNDEE
DD1 9SY

Miss Deborah Wileman
Trainee Clinical Psychologist
NHS Fife / University of Edinburgh
Lynebank Hospital
Halbeath Road
DUNFERMLINE
KY11 4UW

Date:	24May 2007
Your Ref:	
Our Ref:	FB/07/S0501/13
Enquiries to:	Miss Fiona Bain
Extension:	Ninewells extension 32701
Direct Line:	01382 632701
Email:	fionabain@nhs.net

Dear Miss Wileman

Full title of study: The experience of participants' who have attended a group work programme for young people at risk of re-offending: Qualitative Study.

REC reference number: 07/S0501/13

Thank you for your letter of 15 May 2007, responding to the Committee's request for further information on the above research and submitting revised documentation.

The further information has been considered on behalf of the Committee by the Chair. However, you have still not corrected the Committee's title to Fife & Forth Valley REC. It is also good practice in the Information Sheets to include the version number and date as a footer so that it appears on each page.

Confirmation of ethical opinion

On behalf of the Committee, I am pleased to confirm a favourable ethical opinion for the above research on the basis described in the application form, protocol and supporting documentation as revised.

Ethical review of research sites

The favourable opinion applies to the research sites listed on the attached form.

Conditions of approval

The favourable opinion is given provided that you comply with the conditions set out in the attached document. You are advised to study the conditions carefully.

Approved documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Version	Date
Application		
Investigator CV		
Protocol		
Covering Letter		18 February 2007
Letter from Sponsor	Letter from Mrs Anne Fernon	15 January 2007
Interview Schedules/Topic Guides	1	18 January 2007
Letter of invitation to participant	Letter to young person - 1	18 January 2007
GP/Consultant Information Sheets	1	18 January 2007
Participant Information Sheet: Parent/Guardian Information Sheet	3	15 May 2007
Participant Information Sheet: Participant Information Sheet	3	15 May 2007
Participant Consent Form: Consent Form for Parent/Guardian	1	18 January 2007
Participant Consent Form: Consent Form for Young People	1	18 January 2007
Participant Consent Form	2	24 April 2007
Participant Consent Form: Parent/Guardian Consent Form	2	24 April 2007
Response to Request for Further Information		27 April 2007
Response to Request for Further Information		15 May 2007
Certificate of insurance	Clinical trial liability insurance	28 July 2006
Supervisor's CV	Dr Emily F Newman	
Letter of invitation	Letter to Parent/Guardian - 1	18 January 2007

R&D approval

All researchers and research collaborators who will be participating in the research at NHS sites should apply for R&D approval from the relevant care organisation, if they have not yet done so. R&D approval is required, whether or not the study is exempt from SSA. You should advise researchers and local collaborators accordingly.

Guidance on applying for R&D approval is available from
<http://www.rdforum.nhs.uk/rdform.htm>.

Statement of compliance

The Committee is constituted in accordance with the Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees (July 2001) and complies fully with the Standard Operating Procedures for Research Ethics Committees in the UK.

Feedback on the application process

Now that you have completed the application process you are invited to give your view of the service you received from the National Research Ethics Service. If you wish to make your views known please use the feedback form available on the NRES website at:

<https://www.nresform.org.uk/AppForm/Modules/Feedback/EthicalReview.aspx>

We value your views and comments and will use them to inform the operational process and further improve our service.

07/S0501/13	Please quote this number on all correspondence
--------------------	---

Yours sincerely

Chair

Enclosures: Standard approval conditions
 Site approval form

Copy to: The University of Edinburgh
 NHS Fife R&D office

Fife and Forth Valley REC

LIST OF SITES WITH A FAVOURABLE ETHICAL OPINION

For all studies requiring site-specific assessment, this form is issued by the main REC to the Chief Investigator and sponsor with the favourable opinion letter and following subsequent notifications from site assessors. For issue 2 onwards, all sites with a favourable opinion are listed, adding the new sites approved.

REC reference number:	07/S0501/13	Issue number:	1	Date of issue:	24 May 2007
Chief Investigator:	Miss Deborah Wileman				
Full title of study:	The experience of participants' who have attended a group work programme for young people at risk of re-offending: A Qualitative Study.				
This study was given a favourable ethical opinion by Fife and Forth Valley REC on 21 May 2007. The favourable opinion is extended to each of the sites listed below. The research may commence at each NHS site when management approval from the relevant NHS care organisation has been confirmed.					
Principal Investigator	Post	Research site	Site assessor	Date of favourable opinion for this site	Notes ⁽¹⁾
Miss Deborah Wileman	Trainee Clinical Psychologist	NHS Fife	Fife and Forth Valley REC	24/05/2007	

Approved by the Chair on behalf of the REC:

..... (Signature of Chair/Co-ordinator)
(delete as applicable)

..... (Name)

(1) *The notes column may be used by the main REC to record the early closure or withdrawal of a site (where notified by the Chief Investigator or sponsor), the suspension of termination of the favourable opinion for an individual site, or any other relevant development. The date should be recorded.*

'Josh'
19/07/07

Quite good fun?

negative
expectations
'bad' - judged
friends
new people
Aye, (laughs) well, aye, well, I didnae think it wid be fun to start wi', cause you were goin' there fur bein' bad and then it wis good and I met new friends and that, eh, cause I met folk that I didnae ken (*mhm*) and I enjoyed it.

So what was that like, meeting people you didn't know?

apprehension
differences
memories/
reminiscing
Aye, well I wis a bit nervous to start wi' cause I didnae ken naeb'dy (*mhm*) and then when I went in I wis like one o' the oldest there, (other young person), looks about 17 (laughs) but efter the first time it wis aw'right cos I know everybody (*mhm*) and then like I mixed in wi them but then, I dinnae ken, some o' us talked mare than others, and I liked it cause you used to get tae go tae the burger van and get a burger every day (laughs) and the last day when we went to knockhill racing track, that wis great (*mhm*) and then I won (laughs), jist bad that I didnae get tae git the champagne and spray it aw' 'er the place cause, eh, (name of social worker) said that the last time she wis there some guy got a bottle o' champagne but he didnae git tae drink it though bit it got sprayed aw 'er them, and that's about it.

So, why, eh, were you referred to the group?

'stupid'
cycle
stop/start
more trouble
motivation
to attend
implication
for reporter
What did you expect it to be like?
Just loads o', loads o' 'hings. Like, erm, getting' caught wi' drugs, drinkin' in the street and, eh, I 'hink it wis assault, and a breach o' the peace and jist loads o' stupid 'hings that I shouldnae a been daein (laughs). Bit then I hud aw'ready been workin' wi' (name of social worker) before but then I hud stopped workin' wi' her and then I hud got in mare trouble and then she hud asked if I wanted tae go tae the group, eh, and she said if I hud went it would have looked better for the reporter (*mhm*) so, I went tae it (*mhm*).

-re expect
reluctant
?persuaded
I expected it tae be much mare boring than it wis. It wisnae like, I wisnae really wantin' tae dae it, bit, then when (name of social worker) said I should dae it 'n' it'd look better 'n' that I thought I'd jist gie it a try.

So that's what you expected it be like, was it like that?

Nah, it wis aw'right, it wis quite fun.

So, did anything change for you?

learning
stopped
thinking
other input
different from
group
activities

Aye, I learnt a lot o' new 'hings 'n' I've stopped getting' in tae trouble (laughs), but, eh, well, eh, aye, I've no really been in nae trouble, eh, I wis in a lot o' trouble because o' the cannabis. I never been in trouble since. I'd been to (name of youth drugs worker) about all that as well. That wasn't like the group, we just spent time goin' and playin' pool an' goin' tae Burger King 'n' dain' other 'hings that wis gid.

Was that helpful?

Well, we went tae play pool and that a lot and he always won (laughs) I won sometimes but he usually won.

Was that different from being in a group?

other input
freedom
choice
unmatched
?career
understand
it helped

I got to do different things ever day. He just asked me what I wanted and I got tae choose what tae dae. It wisnae like daein' work, it wis mare like he would just take me places, I went tae the gym a good few times and, eh, I wis 'hinkin' aboot goin' tae the army so he wis makin' me run on the treadmill so I suppose that was good. I dunno what it done like, to help me stop offending or wi' the cannabis but it was still good (laughs).

What about the group?

being
aspects
videos - diff
modalities
-responsibility

The work was aw'right, sometimes it wis borin' but sometimes it wis aw'right, just some o' the stuff, watching the videos an' that. Sweet sixteen wis gid.

Do you think you learned anything from that?

learning
recall

Aye, I dae, I learnt a lot aboot peer pressure and loads o' other stuff like that. And what wis the other 'hing? That 'hing you done, there wis a circle, clown in the ring, what wis that about again?

The clown in the ring, like getting pulled in to things by other people?

Aye, like someb'dy sayin' aye you'll no' dae that, makin' me feel bad so then I would go an' dae it. Aye that wis aw'right I learned a lot o' 'hings aboot, cause I used tae, like, I used tae, if somebo'dy telt me tae dae some'hin' then if they were like, aye you're a poof, I'd just end up daein' it, but now I won't. Plus I'm sixteen noo, I've been tryin' tae stay oot o' trouble but it's quite hard 'cause I've been in bother before and the police all ken who I am (*mhm*) so they're always stoppin' me an' gi'in' me a hard time.

So had you ever been in a group before?

Nut, I'd never been in a group. That was the first time. I had a psychiatrist and I spoke to him one to one but never in a group. But then (*name of social worker*) saw me on my own and then wis it no you that came tae ma auld hoose wi' (*name of social worker*)?

That's right, to talk to you about coming to the group. So what do you think young people get out of going to the group?

Dunno (laughs) you learn a lot o' 'hings, aboot, like, the 'hings that you've been dain', like what you've done wrang, like usually when people try tae tell you, you always 'hink you're right, but like, when I wis at the group, it got made like, I understood mare aboot it when you were explaining it tae me. Than, like, usually I'd jist dae any'hin' I wanted and no' listen but you had to think about it at the group.

Usually you would do what you wanted?

Aye, bit like after the group, when you explained, like that folk were makin' me dae 'hings by saying I was a poof, they were makin' me want tae dae it. I had tae prove masel' wrong and find other pals. I wis the youngest in aw my pals, they hud aw turned sixteen so they were staying oot o' trouble, but then I started tryin' aswell after the group.

Right.

*Alcohol
NOT blaming it
responsibility
Shift*
The only time is when I drink Buckfast, my mum says it makes me go mental (laughs). I get pure aggressive, I'm no blamin' the drink anymore, I used tae always blame it on that but it's up tae me no' tae touch it, I always argue wi' her 'n' fall oot wi' her (laughs). My mum'll gi' me money tae drink beer but no' Buckfast.

So you're starting to know what things are bad for you?

Aye.

That's interesting.

*showing
positives*
And I'm goin' on holiday at Christmas wi' ma mum and dad and girlfriend and ma big brother.

What did you find difficult about attending the group?

*good
attendance
at group
meaning
school state
time
felt missed
(- not missed)
at school.)
Responsibility
to group.*
Nothin' really, it was quite easy. I only missed one day and I cannae even remember, aye, I can remember why it wis. I'd been pluggin' the school an' I forgot aboot the group 'n' I'd been skivin' the school and (name of social worker) had came tae pick me up 'n' I wisnae there so I got busted (laughs). But I went every other week, if you didn't go you felt like people would miss you and it wisnae as good when there wisnae many folk so you had to really.

So you're attendance at the group was pretty good?

*Certificates
Reports
Comparing own
achievement
to achievement
of others.
Transportation
taken care
of realization
help self.*
Aye, I 'hink it wis, it wis eighty some'hin'. I was lookin' at it the other day. I've got the certificate and ma report, it was aboot eighty six or som'hin'. There wis only one person who had full attendance. He got a certificate fur it, aye, so it wisnae that hard to attend it. Plus I didnae huv tae make ma ane way there, somebody would come and take me an' then bring me hame, so it wis good.

So why do you think you managed to attend the group so much when you weren't attending school?

I dunno, I just knew I needed tae dae it and I knew it'd make it easier cause I was in a lot o' trouble then and, like, I wis

Reflecting

-ve school
experience

Dommy
hated it

group = miss

school

no problems

at group

? problems

at school

reward

↑ self esteem

'I could do it'

job seeking

Plans for

future

maturity

changed

at home

- trust

- helps to stay

out of trouble

strain on beh-

relationships

at home

improved

Certificates

significant

immins in

comparisons

w/ achievement

of others

Pride in

Achievement

Seeking praise?

just diggin masel' a deeper hole, so I knew if I went to the group I'd maybe get away wi' some o' the stuff and school was jist borin'. I hated every minute o' school but the group, it wis mare enjoyable that sittin' in the class, that was another reason I wanted tae dae the group, tae get oot o' school (laughs). I was only oot for a period cause o' lunchtime an' that but it wis still mare fun than bein' there. And nae hassle, nae bother at the group.

So what was it like when the group ended?

It was good, a fun day, a reward, pizza and go-karting, and then I thought I could go back tae school, I could do it. I only left school on the 10th o' May. I've been lookin' for a job, bit it's hard tae find one, it's no as easy as everybody 'hinks. I've applied to be an apprentice plumber an' ma dad might come an' work up here an' I could work wi' him but if I don't git any'hin' I'll start this course in two weeks I'm meant tae dae, it's jist £55 a week. I need money cause I'm gin' on holiday an' that an' I'm no' expectin' ma maw tae pay for it. I sit in a lot mare noo an' ma mum lets me have pals in noo, cause she trusts me an' that, eh. Saves us goin' oot an' causin' havoc (laughs).

What did your mum and dad think of you doing the group?

Aye, well they really werenae very happy wi' me cause o' after what had happened wi' the car, but efter thr group I got on better wi' them, they thought I was tryin' I think, they were pleased that I finished the group, and that I'd got a certificate and that tae. I was chuffed wi' them.

I was lookin' at it the other day. I've got the certificate and ma report, it was aboot eighty six [% attendance] or som'hin'. There wis only one person who had full attendance. I'd got a certificate and that tae. I was chuffed wi' them. Want tae see them, I'll go and git them

(went to get them)

look this one's was for being supportive and respectful to others

Why do you think you got that (special recognition) certificate?

understanding
of time b/c
beh. a reward
Cause I wisnae causin' nae trouble and plus I liked and respected everyone and I wisnae cheeky tae yous, I didnae complain about the work, I jist sat an' got on wi' it. One o' the others, he was a complainer, aboot workin' aw the time. he always went on aboot every'hing. The rest of us just sat an' got on wi' it.
'the rest of us' - gnp etno 5
moaner - odd are
out
Did anyone try to encourage you to behave like that in the group?

Nup, no really I jist behaved masel'.

What was it like being with the other boys?

not
better /
easier
no trouble
school &
community
= trouble
unpredictable
group - safe
no names
It was aw'right, it wis jist the first time, I, like, I didnae really like but after I'd been a couple of times, and spoke tae them an' that, then I thought it wis aw'right like, we jist spoke like, it wis only that one boy that never really spoke, he just kinda sat but everyone else spoke. I never had any trouble wi' them or that, so, it wis good, you always end up havin' trouble wi' folk at school an' when you're out. You never know what'll end up happening. At the group it was always okay so you didn't have to worry, you could get on.
Tell me about the tasks?

the same
as each other
That was aw'right, everybody had done, basically, the same kinda 'hing.
Okay.

'weirdo' in
other settings?
Some experience
Some problem
embarrassed?
- share.
'freak' - other
settings
Shared experience
But, eh, I dunno, I got on fine wi' everybody an' naeb'dy was sayin' any'hin' or startin' so I didnae feel like a weirdo, that was alright, everybody had done basically the same kinda things. But, eh, I dunno, I got on fine wi' everybody an' nobody was sayin' any'hing or startin' so I didnae feel like a weirdo, like when I spoke about the car, I had tae stand up and speak aboot the car, I felt quite embarrassed but no really because o' them or the staff, I knew they'd done bad stuff tae so the didn't look at me like a freak It felt weird standin' up an' talkin' about it but everyone else stood up as well, I went first so I 'hink that's why I felt so embarrassed but it helped to get on wi' hings cause I knew what they had done. We

Free Nodes

	Name	Sources	R
	after the group	3	9
	behaviour change	6	1
	comparison to sch	5	1
	consequences	6	1
	different people	1	2
	ending- achievem	6	1
	focused work	4	1
	friednship	4	4
	fun	6	1
	future	4	7
	go on for longer	3	3
	got easier	3	6
	hard at first	2	5
	help me	1	2
	last day	1	1
	learning	4	1
	learning environm	6	1
	memories	1	1
	moral developme	4	7
	motivation	1	1
	negative expectati	6	1
	new people	2	3
	new perspective	4	7
	no conflict	4	9
	'normal'	1	1
	past experiences	5	1
	personal agency	2	5
	postive new exper	1	2
	relationship with s	4	9
	relationships out	5	7
	respect	1	3
	responsibility to th	4	4
	responsivity	3	4
	safe space	4	5
	shared experienc	4	7
	shared focus	4	6
	small group	2	2
	structure	3	5
	stuck	1	1
	taken care of	3	4
	view of self	4	1